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Dead Sea scrolls.....p.7

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A woman's right to fish

Oscar Perry Abello

BANGLADESH – If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. *If you teach his wife how to fish, you feed the whole family for a lifetime.* This reality guides more NGOs and development workers worldwide each day, as they come across facts like women do two-thirds of the world's work (but receive only 10 percent of the world's income), or that women produce half the world's food (but own only one percent of the world's farmland).

Unfazed by a lack of equal economic rights, women around the world have taken on growing roles as de facto heads of households while husbands and sons seek migrant work or get caught up in conflict. To serve their growing roles successfully, many women have created or entered informal markets as entrepreneurial gardeners, tailors, or shop owners. They've also formed savings-and-loan clubs, buyers' clubs, and business associations to help overcome institutional obstacles. With first-hand experience of women's issues in business, these women's organizations have great desire to initiate and implement scalable reforms to bring women into the formal economy. Micro-finance does much to get women's businesses started, but they remain without the legal protections and opportunities of participating in the formal sector. Such participation is vital, as the formal economy provides a better catch than the informal economy.

Gender parity needed in business

The Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) is one such organization of women that is helping feed societies not just through women teaching women "how to fish," but also fighting for a woman's "*right* to fish" in the formal economy. BWCCI began in 2001 as an organization of 24 women and today boasts over 1,500 members and counting. Although many are small and micro-enterprises, many are also in the global market for textiles, agriculture, or other goods. Among its services, BWCCI supports its members' participation in trade fairs to provide market opportunities for domestic and international buyers. It has also had remarkable success reforming the national banking system to counter gender inequality in business financing, and has become a valued policy sounding board for public officials in Bangladesh.

BWCCI is not alone; in South Asia and elsewhere, women are confronting gender inequality in the formal sector. Though in a growing number of developing countries women can now vote or hold office, all too often they still cannot own collateral, open bank accounts, register businesses, form contracts, obtain commercial loans, or otherwise fully participate in the formal economy. In a select few countries, women still cannot legally work outside the home. A country's economy remains handcuffed if the formal sector excludes the majority of their own people. In almost all countries, *women outnumber men*.

Women deserve more than micro-finance. A small loan to purchase a cow for selling milk is a great start, but that cow could be collateral for a larger loan to purchase a storefront or a means to store milk or transport to market without a middleman. The land on which the cow and its owner's family live could also be collateral to finance one or more child's primary, secondary, or higher education. Instead of being seized by a deceased husband's family, all of that collateral could remain under the widow's fruitful ownership, passed on intact to a child or sold to another family in need. None of these things will happen as long as only men can own collateral and only men are allowed to approach banks for a commercial loan. All of these things could use some solidarity and support for the growing masses of women who are already demanding their "rights to fish" wherever they see fit.

Oscar Perry Abello works in the Global Programs Department at the Center for International Private Enterprise, which has worked for 25 years to strengthen democracy through market-oriented reform. Oscar graduated from Villanova University in 2008 with a B.A. in Economics and a minor in Peace and Justice Studies, and can be reached at oabello@cipe.org. This article was a blog entry on "God's Politics," part of Sojourners *magazine online, and is printed here with permission.*

The church has changed:

An old novel offers new insight into the Christian Reformed Church today

James Schaap

SIOUX CENTER, Iowa – Writers, like artists of other mediums, like to say that no novel or short story is really finished until it's read, a variation on the old silent-felled-tree-in-the-forest line. As a novelist friend of mine used to say, great fiction is always a C, not an O – that is, like a C it leaves a space for the reader, sufficient space for us to bring our lives into the story and make it real or whole or alive.

Last night I finished Peter De Vries's *Blood of the Lamb*, for the second time. I had read the novel first in the Sixties, a few years after it was published, at a time in my life when I loved the irreverence De Vries wields at his tribe – the Dutch Reformed people into which he was born – for the silliness, even idiocy of their austere piety. In places, the novel is rib-tickling funny. Peter De Vries was, in his mid-20th century era, among the most well read and beloved of American humorists, his novels – most of them at least – knee-slappers.

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News

Church *continued*

There is humor in *Blood of the Lamb* too: Don Wanderhope and his father, aboard their garbage truck, slowly sinking into the primordial ooze of some Chicago land pit – like the *Titanic* into the North Atlantic. Scared to death of their own demise, they start singing the doxology.

But, for the most part, *Blood of the Lamb* isn't funny. Not at all. Or at least it didn't seem so hilarious this time.

A lifetime's perspective

Forty years ago, I was a kid, a rebel, chafing under the strictures of De Vries's own ethnic and religious heritage, a heritage in process of significant change. It was the Sixties, after all, and little if any of our lives were left unaffected by the seismic cultural shifts of the era. At twenty, I read Peter De Vries's *Blood of the Lamb* and roared, as one did at almost anything he ever wrote. Google him sometime and read a few of his finest quotes – he can be absolutely uproarious.

Forty years later, I am no more who I was – not nearly so headstrong, and far, far less sure of my opinions. Forty years later, I've got some scars, even open wounds, from fisticuffs me and the Lord have come to. Last night, when I finished *Blood of the Lamb* again, I knew I had read an entirely different novel. The story hadn't change of course, but I did.

Peter De Vries died in 1993, but I wonder if he ever guessed that of all his novels, *Blood of the Lamb* would be the one that wouldn't go away. My guess is, he did. He wrote it just a year after his daughter, Emily, had died just a few days short of her 11th birthday, after a two-year battle with the leukemia that took her. Much of the novel – that which gives it its immense emotional heft – is the near recitation of prolonged agony that child faced before eventually, finally, succumbing.

Honestly, that story I had almost forgotten because that story didn't hit me when I was twenty. I think it was William Hazlett who once said or wrote something to the effect of no young man thinks he shall ever die. Today, at sixty years old, *Blood of the Lamb* nearly took out the knees of my soul.

De Vries is just as affecting, maybe more so, when he describes Dutch Reformed seriousness as when he makes light of their silliness. Through his daughter's suffering Don Wanderhope goes to war with a fully sovereign God, the author of our faith and our only comfort, on these grounds: for putting his beloved daughter, Carol, through inhuman suffering. De Vries asks the same question Elie Wiesel can't help asking in *Night* and elsewhere, one of the most profound and difficult questions all believers ever face: if God almighty loves us and controls this world, why on earth do we have to suffer so?

Forty years after reading the novel and laughing at my own people, I finished it again last night and just about cried at the legacy of suffering, torturous human suffering, De Vries chronicles in *Blood of the Lamb*. His most memorable novel is not a book for the weak of heart – or soul.

But it was a blessing to me, at sixty. It will be, I'm sure, the best thing I will read this summer.

Reformed by the Sixties

Peter De Vries could have had a field day at Dordt College in the mid-Sixties, just a few years after *Blood of the Lamb* was published. For a time, to keep the Sabbath holy, dorm counselors were required to put Scotch tape over the coin slots on the Coke machines every Sunday morning. Women were almost inexplicably required to wear skirts, not slacks, even though minis were all the rage. Dorm hours were draconian – for women, not men – keep the mares corralled and the stallions were harmless. The Dean of Students would wander residence halls at chapel time, searching out sinners. Rock music was verboten, as were beards, symbols of hippie life, the free love of flower power.

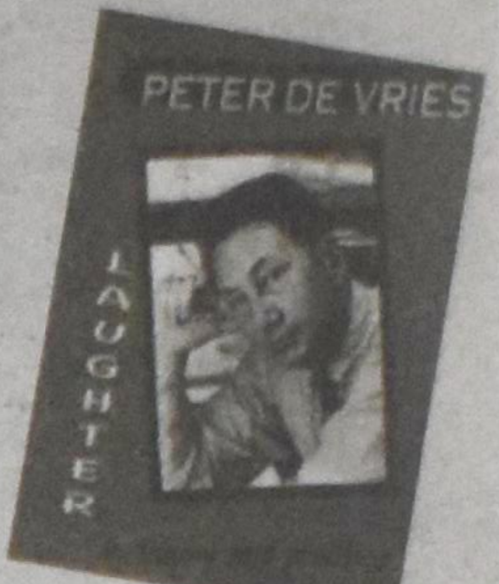
In a strange, but understandable way, at that moment the pietistic rules of Dutch Calvinist culture were as excessive as the hippie culture it so greatly feared. Good Christian people tried to find the means by which to balance that generalized scriptural injunction to be in the world, but not of it – as those of us who are believers still do. The vanities of the time required, or so it was thought, not just lines in the sand but deep military trenches that were themselves blown away by the winds of change (and right here many of us could hum a tune from Bob Dylan).

Clearly, in the Sixties the church – and let me be specific here – the Christian Reformed Church – was beginning to lose its authority. When I was a boy, backsliders were publicly admonished for their sins, even banished from the community; it was called excommunication, a tribal practice all but abandoned in most fellowships today. When I was a boy in a small Dutch Reformed town in Wisconsin, steeples dominated the village skyline. In Iowa, grain elevators soon began to tower over what steeples still existed; besides, most new churches abandoned steeples as unnecessary ornamentation or being, well, too "church-y."

How much is autobiography?

For a fascinating medical study of Carol Wanderhope's leukemia, read Dr. David Steensma's essay in *The Journal of Oncology*. Steensma, an oncologist at Harvard University Medical School, also compares the story's relationship to the medical history of De Vries's own daughter, Emily. You can find the essay online at http://jco.ascopubs.org/cgi/content/full/27/16/2729.

Peter De Vries, American novelist



Peter De Vries was raised in a Dutch Reformed home in Chicago in the early years of the 20th century and graduated from Calvin College in 1931, where he served as editor of the campus newspaper, *The Chimes*. For several years he edited *Poetry* magazine, before moving on and spending most of his working life at the *New Yorker*, where he wrote occasional pieces and specialized in captions for the magazine's legendary cartoons.

Peter De Vries wrote 23 novels, one of which inspired a film, *Pete and Tillie*, while two others were turned into Broadway plays. *Blood of the Lamb* (1961) was his tenth novel.

Many reviews of his novels commented upon his strict Calvinist upbringing as a force and power in him that he never quite lost, a force which left in him a darkly somber view of life, and – as a result – made his particular brand of humor more complex and complicated than many of his own readers ever perceived. He was viewed by many, including Robertson Davies and Harper Lee, to be among America's finest writers. Only two or three of his books are available, all in reprints.

But then, today even grain elevators take second place to media towers. Church, business, media – there's sermon fodder simply in the narrative of our changing sky lines.

A goodly number of us would call that whole difficult transition a liberation, even if our grandparents wouldn't. Thank goodness the stifling parochialism of yesteryear is now, at best, dry bones history, the habitat of historians.

Today, affluence offers options unheard of fifty years ago – cabins up north for summer weekends, international travel, media streams that bring the world's best and worst directly into our family rooms, our studies, our bedrooms, even our kids' bedrooms. The church can hardly compete with such formidable forces. Years ago, an old man I was interviewing for a story told me that going to church and young peoples' meant great joy to him because the rest of the week held little but sweat from hard labor. Church was, for him at least, his fun, his joy, and his only real community.

Encouraging development

Blood of the Lamb is helpful in observing what's been gained: far less Pharisaical posturing and holier-than-thou self-righteousness, an end to punishing violations of only one or two of the sins on Moses's tablet (often the seventh commandment); too much Old Testament-level works righteousness; and mountains of guilt – for not attending church twice on Sunday, for hiding television antennas in the attic space rather than mounting them on the roof, for buying wine or beer or liquor only when you're out of town. My daughter, then just eight years old, once told me that only public school kids had cable TV. That was before we got it ourselves. What's been gained as a result of the church's immense loss of authority? Much, much of that kind of thinking and practice. Thank God.

But if you, like me, are too much a Calvinist to trust progressivism – the belief that somehow the world is a better place because we're smarter, more morally sound because less legalistic, less judgmental than my ancestors – then a question we have to ask is what might have been lost?

Notable losses

Maybe *Blood of the Lamb* offers some possible answers here too. While it makes sport of all our penny-ante prejudices, it also paints a deeply painful portrait of a man named Don Wanderhope, who is so God-haunted that he can no more love him than be rid of him. There's absolutely nothing endearing about that description, of course, so let me phrase it another way: Wanderhope's long and agonizing fight with God almighty is so terrifying that, reading it today suggests to me that maybe, amid our liberation, we have lost a certain kind of God-seriousness. We're all for personal relationships with Jesus these days; that's clear. But I wonder if there are any young writers from the Dutch Reformed world who would or could chronicle as fierce a battle with the reality of living God whose ways are, as they always have been, far beyond our own.

It may well be fair to say that today, within the Christian Reformed Church, there are thousands who love Jesus – and that certainly is a joy and blessing, an article of faith right out of the summary of the law itself. But Don Wanderhope's epic battle in *Blood of the Lamb*, a fight that grew out of a faith tradition now largely gone, was itself borne from what people used to call "the fear of the Lord."

On this 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, it might be instructive to go back to the man whose name so many of us bear, some unwillingly. Not long before Calvin died, he wrote this:

> The will I have had, and the zeal,
> if it can be called that, have been so
> cold and sluggish that I feel deficient

See Church *on page 5*

Eternal Student

Peter Schuurman

Muslim humour

We all know, supposedly, that Muslims do not like cartoons, especially Danish cartoons. Muslim humour, then, must be an oxymoron. I did a little research on this, however, and it does appear there is more than a murmur of mirth in the mosque.

The first thing that comes to mind for most is CBC's sitcom *The Little Mosque on the Prairie* (now producing its fourth season). Based in small town Mercy, the show features the foibles of a fledgling Muslim community, highlighting cultural misunderstandings and the tensions between old school and second generation Muslims.

The show demonstrates a wide diversity of Muslim characters and most of the jokes play with the rigid stereotypes of Muslims, i.e., that they are all terrorists. For example, the local priest rents out his parish hall as the "mosque" for the growing number of Muslims in town. When a parishioner questions this move, the priest assures him it's "just a pilot project."

The incredulous church member replies: "What? They're training pilots in there?"

The writer and producer of the show, Zarqa Nawaz, says through her hijab: "I'm not worried as much about offending people as much as making it as funny as possible."

I recently met a CRC grad student who watches the show religiously. "It reminds me of the tensions in my church," she says.

Pakistani jokes

My next item of research was the movie *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World* (2003), a full-length movie starring and written by "somewhat Jewish" comedian Albert Brooks.

The plot of the movie is basically as follows: the U.S. President wants to better understand the Muslim peoples of the world, and he figures the best way to understand someone is to see what makes them laugh. So Albert Brooks is hired to fly to India and Pakistan and come up with a 500-page report on what makes Muslims laugh.

He finds out when he arrives in India that there are no comedy clubs there, and he can't get a visa for entry into Pakistan. The humour is gentle and wry as he sets up his own comedy show and invites locals from the streets of New Delhi to watch. They do not laugh at all. In the end, he doesn't find out what makes Muslims laugh, but he does sneak across the border into Pakistan to yuk it up with some aspiring opium smoking Muslim comedians.

Allah made me funny

There are a number of aspiring Muslim stand-up comics. To name a few: Preacher Moss, Azhar Usman, Tissa Hami, Jeff Mirza, Riaad Moosa, and Shazia Mirza.

Like *Little Mosque* much of their gig is playing with the common stereotype of dangerous Muslims. While on his "Allah Made Me Funny" tour, Ahar Usman will often begin with "Assalam Aleikum." He then continues: "For those who don't know what that means, it means: 'I'm going to kill you.'"

This customary Muslim greeting really means "Peace be upon you" but Western fears would interpret it otherwise. The incongruity packs the laugh.

"I'm Shazia Mirza," begins Shazia Mirza, wrapped in her hijab. "At least that's what it says on my pilot's license." Mirza, of course, is not a pilot, but a former science teacher who wants to dispel the misconceptions of "all Muslim women as oppressed, all Asian women as having arranged marriages, and women as not funny."

Muhammad laughs

The real authority on anything Muslim is Muslim scholars' interpretation of Islamic law. One scholarly article a Muslim colleague gave me says that moderate joking that is not "exaggerated or continuous" is permitted as it may serve to calm, relieve, and entertain people. Joking that is hostile, offensive, and leads to hard-heartedness and loss of respect is prohibited.

The writer, Soumy Ana, goes on to describe places in the Hadith (stories of Muhammad's life) where he smiles, laughs, makes a play on words, or teases his companions. There are a few instances where Muhammad laughs so hard "his grinders become visible."

As for the main Muslim text, the Quran, there aren't many "ha ha's" between its covers. I read an article entitled "Humor in the Quran," but, aside from some slight comic edges in a few stories, there is little to chortle over.

So to summarize: Is there Muslim humour? Yes, lots. Should Reformed Christians be surprised? Certainly not. God created all human beings with a capacity for laughter as much as sadness. Common grace includes "common giggles." We just don't associate Muslims with playfulness, given our one-dimensional understanding of these 1.3 billion people.

Note that some of what I've presented above is most accurately described as "Western" humour in Muslim garb. This is evidence that Muslims are accommodating to Western culture as much as they are challenging it.

Non-Western Muslim humour, however, is still a mystery to me, as it was to Albert Brooks. Given that the last thing outsiders understand of another culture is its humour, curious Western Christians like myself suffer a serious handicap in research. Even if it was carefully explained to us in English, it might be lost in the translation. Safe to say, we all laugh, but we do not all laugh at the same things. Beliefs shape our funny bones, and some Muslim humour is only amusing for Muslims.

Tales of Nasruddin

One example of Muslim humour is the stories that surround the 13th century character known as mullah Nasruddin. Sources differ, but he was most likely a Persian Sufi philosopher who told anecdotes that poked fun at people. Google his name and you'll encounter a whole host of stories, tales, and jokes. Here is one such tale.

One day Mullah Nasruddin goes around to his neighbour's house and asks if he can borrow a pot for a day or two. His neighbour is reluctant but eventually agrees as they've been close friends for many years.

The very next day, Mullah Nasruddin returns two pots and explains to the over-delighted neighbour that the first pot gave birth to the second pot.

A week later, Mullah Nasruddin asks his neighbour if he can borrow two pots. The neighbour immediately agrees – for the obvious reason. But to the neighbour's dismay, Mullah Nasruddin never returns the pots. So he asks Mullah Nasruddin if he can have his pots back, but the Mullah Nasruddin explains that tragically both pots have died. The neighbour is incensed. "How can a pot die?" he demands.

"You believed it when a pot gave birth," said Mullah Nasruddin. "Why should you not believe that a pot dies?"

Peter Schuurman lives in Guelph, Ontario where he parents his two childre, Joseph and Petra. He is also part-time faculty at Redeemer University College where he teaches World Religion.

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Editorial

How to get the biggest bang for your unholy buck!

Bert Witvoet

Three years ago, while my wife and I were on a two-month education "mission" in South Africa, we were invited to spend a Saturday touring the northern-most part of South Africa with our hosts. We saw the largest Baobab tree in the world, and we almost hugged the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. Earlier that day we had traversed the Soutpansberg mountains, a range that, according to a website on the Soutpansberg Conservancy, "runs for about 130 kilometers from east to west and are up to 60 kilometers wide. You don't so much climb them as venture into them; the lower slopes littered with valleys and impassable bush whilst the heights take one through a canopy forest often shrouded in clouds."

We were about to descend from those mountains via Route N1, when we drove past a group of hawkers on the right side. One of them sold woodcarvings. I asked our host if we could turn back and see the carvings. He complied. So we stopped and admired the beautiful smooth carvings displayed along the highway. A few of them were life-size figures. Made of ironwood, they must have weighed a ton. Our return by plane a month later would not permit us to purchase them. Besides, what do you do with such large figures in a medium-size home? Never mind the price. I was looking for something more modest but still substantial.

A careless offer

The young man who was trying to sell his wares was from Zimbabwe. He told me that he and his uncle did the carvings. I had heard before that many of the carvings sold in South Africa come from Zimbabwe. His uncle still lives there, and he, his nephew, had chosen this site along the highway in South Africa to make some money for his family. Behind him a family of baboons were fighting each other. I took a picture of the young man next to the life-size figures, as well as of the baboons. I then walked to another spot where some of the carvings were displayed. My eye fell on a figure of a fisherman, sitting on his haunches. I figured it was about two feet high and probably weighed between five to ten lbs. Later measurements revealed 22 inches and eight lbs.

The young man saw that I admired the piece and said that it was worth 250 rand but that he would let me have it for 200. I was not sure I wanted the artifact. It would be quite awkward to transport it in my luggage. I walked on to look for something smaller. "Two hundred rand," he said again. "One hundred and fifty rand," I countered carelessly, thinking he wouldn't accept that anyway, and being quite content to look for something smaller. My host started to talk with him in Venda. I don't know what he said, but I got the idea that he urged him to sell it at 150 rand. Finally, the vendor agreed. I could have it for 150 rand. So I paid him the money, he wrapped the carving in newspapers, and we went our way, down the mountain, through the two Verwoerd tunnels, and back to the home of our hosts.

"I decided against buying these two life- size pieces."

"Our host, Elias Makhuva, persuaded the young man to let me have the smaller sculpture for R150."

Feelings of regret

The more I looked at the carving the more I liked it. It had been extremely well carved and polished. Seeing that it was from Zimbabwe, I promptly called him Mugabe. Maybe it was the name of Mugabe that triggered it, but eventually I felt there was something wrong about the purchase. In my mind I began to convert rands into dollars, something you don't always do when you stay in a foreign country for any length of time. I realized that I had paid no more than $22 for what must have taken the young man's uncle days of work. I felt cheap. I should have agreed at least to what he at first had offered: 200 rand. That would still have been no more than $30. The actual price of 250 rand or $37 was closer to what it certainly was worth. Knowing how hard life is in Zimbabwe, I should have paid him that price. True, I didn't at first want to buy the carving, but I have since come to love it. It felt as if I had taken advantage of his weak position, a foreigner in a land flooded with refugees. This young man needed to sell something. I don't think too many people stopped and purchased his goods.

Last year, Alice and were back in South Africa, and there were a couple of opportunities to drive past the spot where I had made the purchase. I looked for my man. I wanted to make up for my less than just act. Maybe he would have a Mrs. Mugabe, for which I could pay him the full price. But he was nowhere to be found. "Where is he now?" I wondered. "Did he go back to Zimbabwe?" When we visited Bulawayo in Zimbabwe I even watched for him there in case his wares were displayed in the market place. To no avail. So, Mugabe sits in our living room, a string of fish around his neck and a basket in front of him. A reminder of how we Westerners take advantage of our underprivileged neighbours. I have forgiven myself, and I quite enjoy the product of a wondrous act of creativity and care by my Zimbabwean neighbour. But I haven't forgotten the lesson.

A foolish monk

Just recently I read the book *The Economics of Honor* by Roelf Haan. In it Haan relates a story of a medieval monk. "He had been on a pilgrimage to Rome and, while travelling, had bought a silver chalice, intending to place it in his hometown cathedral. On his way to Germany he showed his purchase to two merchants who were travelling with him, and mentioned to them what he had paid for his treasure. The market-wise traders congratulated him on his buy, calling it a real bargain, as he had gotten it well below its real value. They were quite amused that this simple monk had unintentionally gotten a far better deal than they ever had. Yet when the monk heard the true worth of the chalice he was flabbergasted. He immediately left the traders and returned to Rome to pay the seller the difference." (p.4)

In the eyes of the world this simple monk was foolish. I, on the other hand, a simple editor with no commercial bone in my body, would be praised for my smart dealings. Congratulations, Bert. You understood the law of supply and demand. Well done!

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News/Letter

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in everything and everywhere. . . . Truly, even the grace of forgiveness [God] has given me only renders me all the more guilty, so that my only recourse can be this, that being the father of mercy, he will show himself the father of so miserable a sinner.

I don't believe I know many people who would say such things anymore, if in fact someone should. But thus saith John Calvin – late, late, late in life.

I'm not wanting to go back, nor, I hope, am I engaging in nostalgia. I'm sitting at a table in a cabin on a lake myself right now. I'm simply asking a question here – what might we have lost?

Defining reverence

Professor Christian Smith and his researchers and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill published a study in 2006 that examined religious practice among American teenagers (Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Eyes of American Teenagers) and determined that most young people today maintain a view of God almighty that he and his research team characterized as "moral, therapeutic deism, a faith that is characterized by, simply enough, moralism, feeling good, and not much else. There are times that I wonder – and I teach "covenant youth"– whether young people's attitudes don't resemble that of their parents, that of many – if not all – of us.

How many of us fight with God, like Jacob – or like the psalmist of Psalm 88:

13 *But I cry to you for help, O LORD;*
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
14 *Why, O LORD, do you reject me*
and hide your face from me?
15 *From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death;*
I have suffered your terrors and am in despair.
16 *Your wrath has swept over me;*
your terrors have destroyed me.
17 *All day long they surround me like a flood;*
they have completely engulfed me.
18 *You have taken my companions and loved ones from me;*
the darkness is my closest friend.

If you haven't read it lately, that's where the psalm ends.

Like Psalm 88, Peter De Vries's *Blood of the Lamb* is not a pleasure to read. The title itself a searing pun. Wanderhope calls his daughter a lamb; it's her blood that has been shed painfully in this novel, in expiation for the sin of belief. The title is a stiletto between the ribs of the Lord. It's not pretty. Don Wanderhope loses the fight, and so does, in a certain way, the love of God. But the battle is Promethean, and the God of *Blood of the Lamb* is nothing to sneeze at.

Those readers with a knowledge of the tribe in which Peter De Vries was raised will find it remarkable that the man's first cousin was another Peter with a significant following – Reverend Peter Eldersveld, the almost legendary first broadcast voice of the Back to God Hour. If letters ever passed between those two, wouldn't they be rich? They could not be more different, with one exception: they undoubtedly shared a deep and unshakeable God-seriousness.

I found the novel *Blood of the Lamb* – this time to be sure – as deadly serious as it is instructive. Sometimes going back to an old text results in a whole new look, paints a wholly different picture, something to make you stop and gaze.

If we can identify our own strengths and weaknesses, we become more capable of continuing to speak to the issues of our day with the voice of a deeply held and ever zealous commitment to Jesus Christ, and with reverence to God.

James C. Schaap has been teaching literature and writing at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, for more than 30 years. During that time, he's written many books and articles, including CRC Family Album: the Unfinished Story of the CRC. *His latest book is a collection of meditations titled* Sixty at Sixty: A Boomer Looks at the Psalms *(Faith Alive, 2008).*

Improving the consistency of livestock transportation

Jenny Denhartog

When traveling Ontario's highways you will notice that the transportation of large animals is common and constant. From tractor trailer loads of hogs on the way to the processing plant to show horses on their way to the next competition, livestock transport is an important part of Ontario's economy.

Due to increased emphasis on animal welfare, conditions for animals in transit have improved over the past number of years. Research has led to the development of better equipment and handling practices and mandatory stopovers for long distance hauling. Several groups, including livestock organizations, continue to be involved in the research and development of further improvements. For many livestock owners the safety of their animals during transport is paramount, as stress and injuries will cause a reduction in the animal's productivity, value or performance.

Like many others, I spend a fair amount of time on the road with a truck and horse trailer, traveling across Ontario and the northern United States, at times spending a week or more away from home. Over time I have come to accept that certain conditions, such as potholes and holdups at construction zones or country borders, will cause a certain level of discomfort for the animals that are on the trailer. Those circumstances are unavoidable.

But there are risk factors that could be avoided. In several fact sheets on transporting animals, it's recommended to, "plan your braking and slow down gradually." So I would like to see mention in the driver's manual of the need for all drivers to take extra care when passing or pulling in front of livestock trailers. Many times I have had to brake hard because of careless drivers pulling onto the road right in front of me, causing the animals on the trailer to scramble to keep their balance, thereby increasing the risk of injury. For that same reason I would like to suggest that many traffic lights, especially in areas where the speed limit is 80 or 90, need better indication that a green light is going to change, at least a few hundred yards in advance, allowing for a much smoother reduction in speed than is currently the case.

The livestock sector is working hard to make transportation as safe as possible for animals, handlers and drivers. Ontario is home to roughly 1.7 million cattle, close to 3 million hogs, 370,000 sheep and approximately 200,000 horses. Almost all of those animals will, at some point in their lives, be transported from one place to another. As the industry strives for further improvements in this area, all other stakeholders should be aware of the important role they play in keeping these animals safe on the road.

Jenny Denhartog is the Field Services Associate of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. CFFO is supported by 4,353 family farmers across Ontario.

Four 'blunders'

I would like to make a few comments about some articles in the *CC* issue of June 22. Derek Miedema states that all of life is sacred, but the word "sacred" does not appear in Scripture. Those who favour capital punishment or adhere to the so-called just war theory may not agree that ALL of life is sacred. So, I wonder what Miedema meant here.

Peter Schuurman remarks that the Belhar confession would be the fourth one of the church, but he ignores the fact that that church has three ecumenical confessions in addition to the three forms of unity (between reformed churches). The Belhar would be the seventh confession, not the fourth. Incidentally, why make it a confession rather than a testimony?

According to Bert Witvoet, Moses spent 20 years with Jethro's family. But, according to Acts 7:30, he spent 40 years with them. Now I have no problem to regard the 3x40 years of Moses' life as symbolical, but where does Witvoet get the 20 years from?

A headline states "Former Spanish president." However, Aznar was never a president for the simple reason that Spain is a monarchy. He was a prime minister from 1996 to 2004. Obviously, CNA, from which CC apparently copied the article, did not know its facts and *CC* didn't bother to make a correction of the blunder.

Bert den Boggende,
Brooks, Alberta

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News

Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman

A service call to Mkar

Participants in the "Faith and Computer Technology" seminar held at the University of Mkar.

Derek Schuurman

MKAR, Nigeria – For many years Redeemer University College students have enthusiastically raised funds for the University of Mkar (formerly called "Hilltop University"). Redeemer students hold an annual auction called "Hobbies for Hilltop" where students auction all manner of goods and services to raise funds for this small Christian university in Nigeria. In the past, they have also organized a more folically-focused fundraiser called "Hairless for Hilltop." Frequent *CC* contributor Al Wolters once graciously lost his longstanding whiskers to raise some substantial funds for this very cause. But this year, rather than just sending a cheque, Redeemer sent some people to Mkar. The trip was a wonderful privilege for us to meet people at the University of Mkar and to build additional bridges between our institutions. The focus of the trip was to assist them to repair and update their ailing computer labs and to provide some relevant workshops and seminars.

The University of Mkar is located in a small rural town in south-central Nigeria about five hours drive "down bush" from Jos. The university is run by the NKST church (the Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv) which is located in an area largely populated by people of the Tiv tribe. The NKST church, together with other Reformed churches in Nigeria, vastly outnumber the membership in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. I found it amazing that so many Reformed churches and Christian schools and even a Reformed Christian university have emerged in the short time since pioneering missionaries such as Johanna Veenstra arrived in the 1920s. Like the yams that grow abundantly in this area, God has also allowed the seed of the word to fall on fertile soil and produce a large harvest.

Tiv piety and hospitality

On Pentecost Sunday we had the opportunity to attend a Tiv language service at a large NKST church. Although we did not understand the language, the service was beautiful. It was also long – roughly three hours – something to which we were not accustomed. Singing with Tiv words printed in a song book, I did my best to sing along and sound out the words. At one point, a lady stood up and recited the Pentecost story (in Acts 2) from memory. Later, members of the choir came walking down the aisles simultaneously singing different songs with candles perched on their heads to represent Pentecost. Afterward, the minister assured us in English that they are not Pentecostal but still very Reformed. In my mind, no explanation was required; it was a beautiful sight. We also attended some English chapel services where the singing was an interesting mix of what appeared to be more traditional African-style songs alongside hymns from the old blue Psalter Hymnal. Many mornings we woke up to the sound of children at a local school singing hymns and other songs. I was impressed with the piety of the local students as we attended chapel and student services.

Many people that we met were hospitable and gracious, although at times I felt they may have been a little too deferential towards us. Furthermore, it was clear that they were extremely thankful that we came. I must confess that I felt a little isolated at times, and I know my diet was stretched some. I can now add pounded yams and fresh mangoes to my dietary resume. I was thankful for a wise and hospitable Christian widow named Margaret who prepared most of our meals and who helped look after us.

Digital divide

People there face many challenges. In addition to health and economic challenges, there are numerous technical challenges. One of the big challenges that we immediately discovered was electrical power (or the lack thereof). The power is off far more often than it is on, making the use of computers and other electrical devices extremely challenging. In this regard, unreliable power contributes to the so-called "digital divide" (the gap between those with reliable access to digital technology and those without). Computers require the use of a UPS (Un-interruptible Power Supply) along with backup generators. Teaching can also be a challenge. I observed a programming class which was taught in the computer lab with a whiteboard, paper and pencils, since the power was out for much of the class. Many of the computers we worked on were also quite old and in need of repair, several of them suffering from blown power supplies that were likely due to regular power interruptions.

Not only is reliable power a challenge, but so is reliable Internet access. I find it hard to imagine working in post-secondary education and doing research without regular Internet access. In the absence of Internet access, they use an "eGranary" server (see http://www.widernet.org/digitallibrary/) in the library. The eGranary Digital Library is a collection of millions of digital educational resources stored on a large hard drive that can be accessed by patrons on their local area network. This resource was a helpful addition to their modest library collection.

Students gather around a professor demonstrating an updated workstation in the computer lab.

Although Internet access was limited, cell phones were ubiquitous. Almost everyone appeared to have a cell phone, and even in the small rural town where we stayed we observed nearly full-bar reception. Cell phone recharge cards were easily obtained and could be bought from brightly coloured roadside kiosks alongside other vendors selling fresh fruit and yams. Mobile phones are an example of a "leapfrog technology" that has enabled developing nations to bypass the wired phone infrastructure and jump directly into modern mobile communications technology.

Another huge problem we observed was the rapid proliferation of computer viruses which plagued many computers. Since very few people have Internet access, the primary way to transfer files is to use a USB flash drive, and these become the medium through which many viruses propagate. The lack of Internet access also means that people are unable to get regular anti-virus updates. One alternative we provided was to install Linux on many of the machines – Linux is a powerful and free operating system that can run on older hardware and is immune to Windows viruses (I plan to share more about Linux in a future article). I also had the opportunity to offer some technical workshops for some of the students and professors. In the end, there was simply not enough time for us to help with all the computer work that needed to be done at the university and elsewhere.

Faith perspective important

I was also invited to give a talk in chapel, where I gave a message based on the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). After spending time focusing on improving computer labs, I deliberately chose the tower of Babel as a reminder about the place of technology. In addition, I spoke at a one-day seminar on "Faith and Computer Technology." The seminar was well attended with approximately 50 participants from roughly six different schools and universities. Giving the workshop was an honour and a delight; participants appeared genuinely engaged and seemed interested in hearing about how faith can inform areas like computer technology. One participant remarked that he appreciated the seminar and how his view on the connection between faith and technology had changed. In hindsight, I suspect that sharing this perspective was equally (or perhaps more) important than the technical work we accomplished.

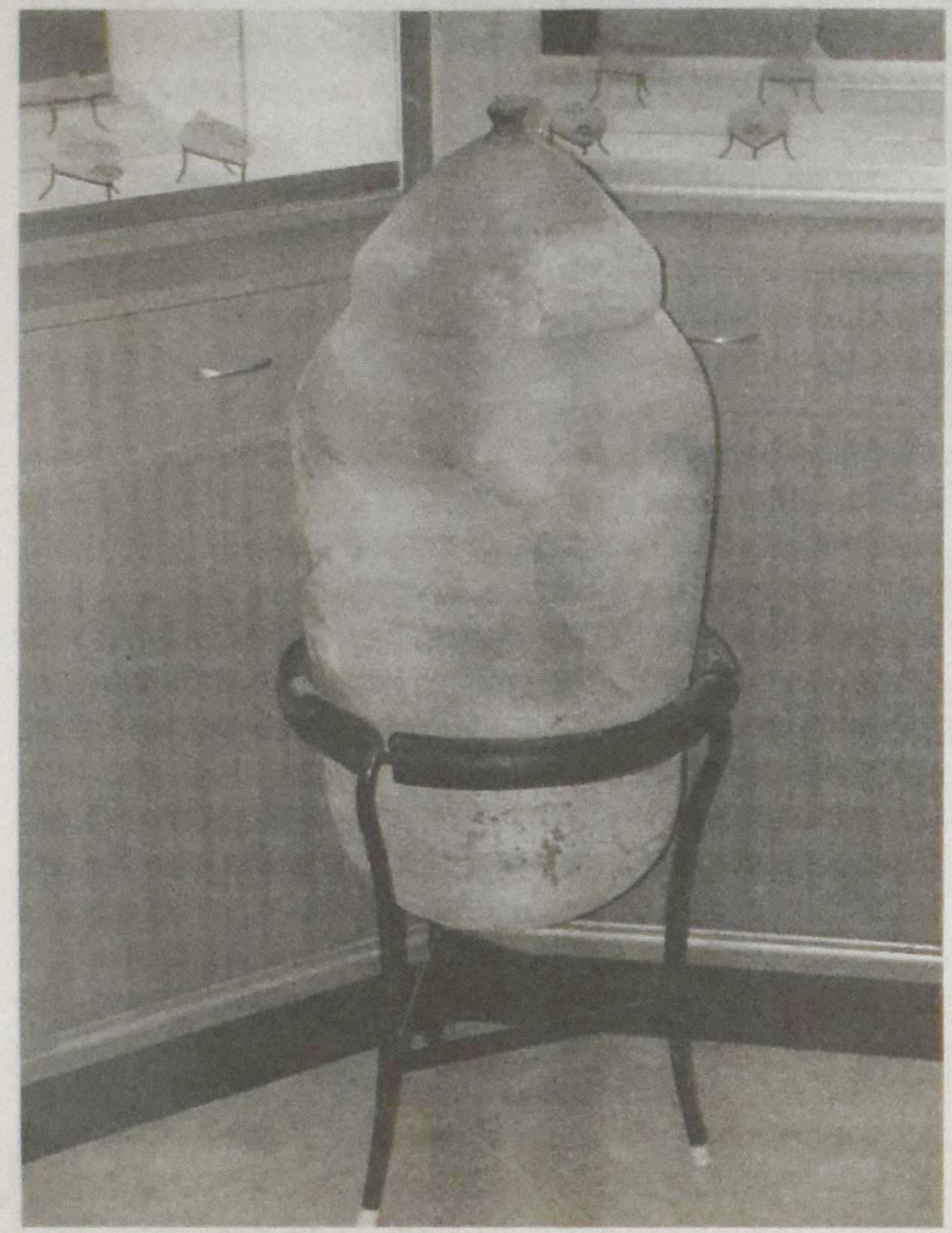
While I was there I met a few people and heard of others who had landed in positions of leadership and responsibility after being trained in Christian schools in Nigeria. It seems that one way to help shape people and nations is to provide solid Christian education. One elderly man spoke passionately to me about the importance of Christian higher education. While pounding his cane on the ground, he declared that "knowledge without integrity is dangerous."

From left to right: Derek, Matt West, and Dirk VanderSteen are served a traditional meal of pounded yams and chicken.

My hope is that the time we spent in Mkar was helpful and fruitful for the university. I encourage *CC* readers to pray for this fledgling Christian university as well as other institutions around the world that seek to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the area of higher education.

Dr. Derek Schuurman (dschuur@cs.redeemer.ca), a professor at Redeemer University College, traveled this past May to the University of Mkar in Nigeria. Accompanied by a recent Redeemer graduate, Matthew West, Derek volunteered to update and repair their computer labs and to offer various workshops. The University of Mkar is a Reformed Christian university located in Benue state, Nigeria.

Dead Sea Scrolls: Words that changed the world



Qumran jar that held dead sea scrolls.

Hannah Hoogendam

TORONTO – On June 1, 1954, *Wall Street Journal* subscribers saw the following advertisement: "The Four Dead Sea Scrolls: Biblical manuscripts dating back to at least 200 BC are for sale. This would be an ideal gift to an educational or religious institution by an individual or group. Box F206." Well, even if you missed your chance to buy it then, the priceless collection of scrolls, now owned by the state of Israel, can be viewed at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto until January 3, 2010.

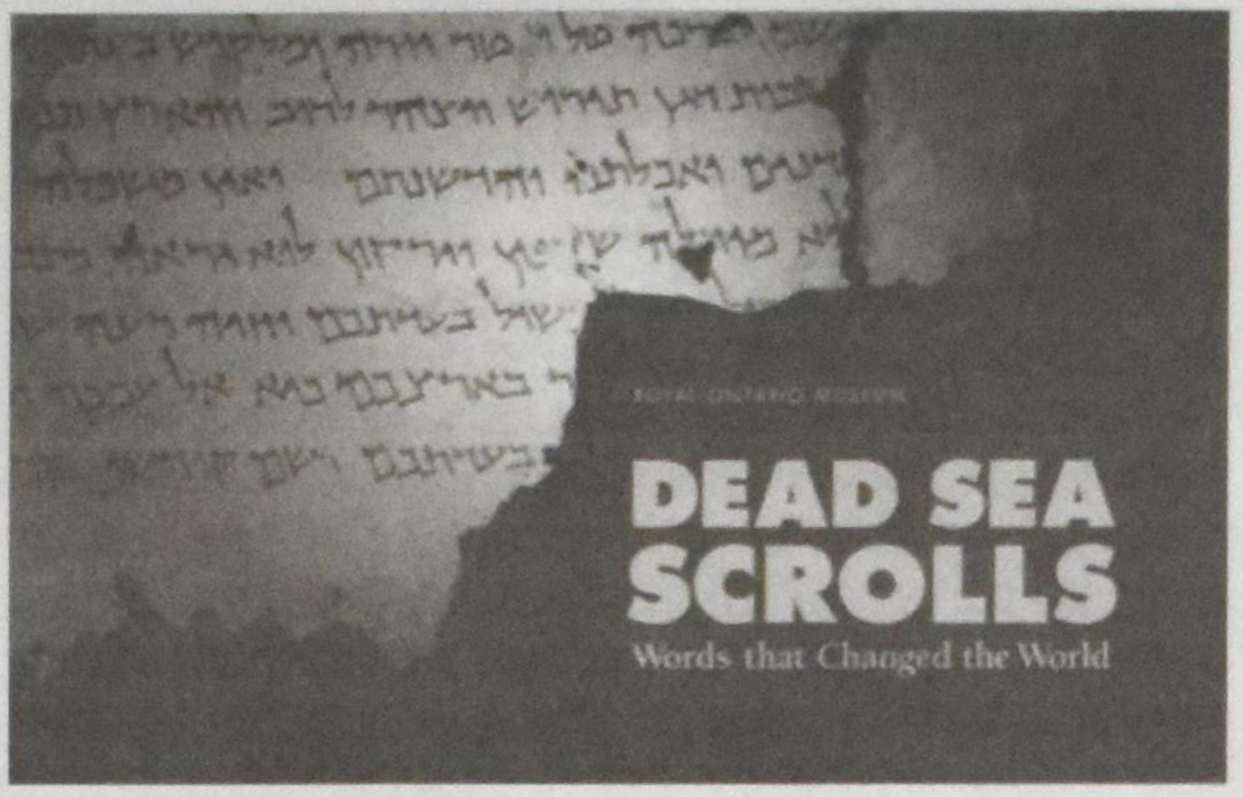
The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of 900 scrolls that were found in 11 caves along the north-western shore of the Dead Sea. The majority of the scrolls were uncovered between 1947 and 1956 after their discovery by a Bedouin goat herder. The Bedouin threw a rock up to a wayward goat, and heard the rock fall down what sounded like a deep cavern. His investigation into that cave began what has been called the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times.

Miraculously, the scrolls were preserved for about 2000 years in tall, cylindrical clay jars hidden in these caves, high above the waterline in the dry desert southeast of Jerusalem. Linen cloths enwrapped the parchment scrolls (a few were papyrus) for thousands of years without much disintegrating or decomposing. Archaeologists who have preserved and studied the scrolls since the 1940s state the scrolls were written between 250 BCE and 68 CE, and it is only the dry climate that has allowed the organic materials to remain intact for two millennia.

The "words" that the exhibit title refers to are the oldest copies of many Old Testament books. These ancient Hebrew words include portions of Genesis, Psalms, Daniel and 19 complete copies of the book of Isaiah. There is a copy of all Ten Commandments in almost the same Hebrew text as we know it today. Poetry, liturgies, a book of war and community rules are also inscribed on these ancient scrolls.

Cultural context

I enjoyed the exhibit's focus not only on the fragments themselves, but on the life of the Jewish people of the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE and 1st century CE, the centuries leading



up to and including the life of Jesus. The exhibit begins with a display of artefacts found in the ruins of the ancient city of Sepphoris, a Galilean city a few hours walk from Nazareth. The city is an example of the way the Jews were influenced by the Greek way of life. Archaeologists uncovered small, glass vials containing the remains of black cosmetics, similar to ones found around Greece. Further along, the exhibit displays artefacts from Jerusalem and discusses the importance of the temple at that time. A digital tour of the temple from the first century CE shows how grand the temple was at the time Jesus visited. The characters on the screen look so small compared to the myriad steps leading up to the temple courtyards. The penultimate hallway discusses the ancient settlement of Khirbet Qumran, a community located near the caves that housed the Dead Sea scrolls. Archaeologists hold three opposing theories to explain the presence of the community near the caves, the purpose for the community, and how the community is linked to the scrolls. The curator has left the viewer to decide for him or herself which theory carries the most credibility.

Since their discovery, the Dead Sea Scrolls have given both Old and New Testament scholars fresh material for analysis and comparison. The scrolls are the oldest surviving biblical manuscripts by about one thousand years.

Hannah Hoogendam lives (and used to teach) in London, Ontario. She has always enjoyed reading and learning. She is currently working on her Masters in Library and Information Sciences at the University of Western Ontario.

What is so rare as a day in June? Then, if ever, come perfect days. . .

James Russell Lowell

"What is so rare as a day in June?" My answer is this: "A day in July." Canada Day, 2009. As I write this on July 2, I cannot recall a better day than yesterday.

For one thing, my wife didn't have to work, so we could sleep in, do a little garden work, have coffee together in the front yard.

For another, we had family guests. Sam and Shelbi Gesch and three children arrived from Oostburg, Wisconsin, on their way to Metlakatla, B.C., for a six-week assignment for North American Indian Mission. (When you live in Central British Columbia and have relatives visit from afar – twice as far for them to travel as for you to visit them – you are more than a little pleased.) And the children were delightful, discovering Chester, the Wonder Dog; walking through a garden that didn't end; playing with a reclusive cat; leaving doors open to grant access to mosquitoes; playing in the hammock; trying to feed sunflower seeds to the birds – Elanor got within a couple feet of some siskins; and listening to Betsey read *Bedtime for Frances*.

More blessings. Betsey's company picnic (to which the guests were invited) on the neighbouring farm. A barbeque that included thanksgiving for God's gifts of food, drink, employment, and a free country; frisbee toss; zillions of gifts wrung from hardware wholesalers and suppliers; a manager's speech in which he thanked all employees, owners, and suppliers for their contributions to a successful year; and a hayride.

A walk down a country road in which Corwin had time to simply sit cross-legged in the dust when he got tired without fear of being squashed by traffic. Discovering wild roses, the nectar of columbines, Indian paint brush, nasty daisies – a weed in our area; a creek that occupies the side of the hill, not the low valley; and eight week-old ducklings in our pond, ducklings hidden from all of us by Mrs. Mallard all that time; a spotted sandpiper scolding us for getting too close to her young.

Sunflower seeds for the birds.

And more birds: siskins, yes; and purple finches; tree swallows leaving the thirteen nests in the yard; two pairs of robins with young in the shed; barn swallows with young dive-bombing the robins which were simply looking for worms; juncos teaching their children how to stalk seeds at a bird-feeder; all the swallows plus a bluebird and a robin dive-bombing a kestrel foolish enough to think it could catch a swallow; harried, dirty, scrawny hairy woodpeckers feeding bits of suet to their sleek, clean, spoiled young.

And tame birds: the chickens. Three teen-aged chicks looking gawky and self-conscious. A neurotic hen with four Buff Orpington chicks. An even-more-neurotic buff silkie sitting on eggs. Two roosters, the big one and a bantam boy-soprano. An Olympic trial for jumping by three hens that grab stale bread from pint-sized hands held head-high.

And the first sunny, warm day after two weeks of cold, cloudy, windy weather worthy of St. John's. The First of July matched any day in June I could remember.

Sufficient unto the day were the mercies thereof.

Curt Gesch (curtgesch@hotmail.com) lives in Quick, B.C., a place as easy to find as Camelot.

Church

Iran moves to scrap death penalty for 'apostates'

LOS ANGELES (Compass Direct News) – A member of Iran's Parliament says the Parliament has amended Iran's penal code to eliminate the mandatory death penalty for those who leave Islam for another religion. Islam calls such people apostates, and most Islamic countries require such converts to be sought and killed.

Ali Shahrokhi, a member of Iran's Legal and Judicial Committee of Parliament, told the Iranian state news agency (IRNA) of the decision, which was then reported on by the BBC Persian news service.

The Parliamentary Committee had come under intense international pressure to drop clauses from the Islamic Penal Code Bill that allowed stoning and made death the mandatory punishment for apostates. The new penal code was originally approved in September 2008 by a preliminary parliamentary vote of 196-7. But that bill must still pass through a final parliamentary vote before being sent to Iran's most influential body, the Guardian Council, which will rule on it.

The council is made up of six conservative theologians appointed by Iran's Supreme Leader and six jurists nominated by the judiciary and approved by Parliament. This body has the power to veto any bill it deems inconsistent with the constitution and Islamic law. The Christian and Baha'i communities of Iran will be most affected by this decision. Joseph Grieboski, president of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, says the timing of the announcement of the decision during protests over contested elections might not be coincidental.

Self-preservation

"Were the regime to maintain [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad's presi-dency then pass and enforce a restrictive penal code, the international pressure on Iran would be unbearable for the regime," said Grieboski. "I do not consider it a sign of opening up. Instead, I see it as a sign of self-preservation."

Huge protests over the election results demonstrated considerable opposition to the Iranian government's heavy-handed tactics, and many Christians have supported the opposition, according to sources connected to social networking sites.

In the face of the massive protests a spokesman for the foreign ministry, Hassan Qashqavi, released a statement condemning Western involvement in Iranian affairs and accusing the BBC and Voice of America networks of spreading "anarchy and van-dalism." This passing of blame bodes ill for minorities in the country, including Christians, whom the Iranian government sees as pawns of the West; they could expect even harsher treatment in a feared post-election clamp-down.

An Iranian Christian who requested anonymity told Compass News that both Christians and Iranians as a whole were tired of the dictatorial regime, and asked for prayers for relief. "The people . . . have no hope: mentally, financially, spiritually, it is really difficult to live in Iran," the source said. "You can't have a private life, you can't make a decision about what you believe, women can't even decide what to wear. We just pray for the whole nation."

Missionaries engage converts online

ORLANDO, Florida (RNS) – Ever since Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission, missionaries have ventured across the globe to share the gospel. Today, the new mission field is just a mouse-click away.

Some two-million web surfers a day type keywords such as "God" and "Jesus" into search engines. Hundreds of thousands of those searchers end up at one of 91 websites operated by Global Media Outreach, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ that dispatches domestic missionaries to the far corners of the World Wide Web.

Those 91 websites describe the basics of Christianity, beginning with who Jesus is, and they provide forms on which surfers can submit questions and share personal stories with one of the ministry's 3,000 missionaries. The missionaries, in turn, respond via e-mail with personal messages, Bible teachings and prayers.

It is the newest way to reach the lost, says the Rev. Allan Beeber, Orlando director of Global Media Outreach, which also has offices in Silicon Valley. "The paradigm of evangelism is changing. In the past, various Christian groups would go door-to-door, or they would hold citywide crusades," he said. "The paradigm change is that people are now coming to us."

Surf traffic doubled last year

The number of spiritual surfers has grown so much since the ministry launched less than a decade ago that officials now hope to double the number of missionaries by the year's end. In the last year alone, traffic on the ministry's websites more than doubled.

Campus Crusade is among the world's largest nondenominational campus ministries, with some 55,000 students involved at more than 1,090 colleges and universities in the U.S. alone. Worldwide it offers 29 ministries in 191 countries.

Global Media Outreach has partnered with Northland, a local megachurch, to add missionaries and a church-planting effort to the ministry. Now, when surfers e-mail about how to start a church, Northland can respond with church-planting resources.

The partnership is a good fit for Northland, which teaches the biblical concept that a church is its people, says pastor Rev. Dan Lacich. Some 10,000 people worship each Sunday at one of Northland's multiple locations, including 1,000 online. "It's another tool," Lacich says. "What we're hoping happens is that missionaries who are in the field...will get encouragement and support from this ministry as we're able to connect them with people who are near them."

Technology is now at a point at which Christian leaders can track how many people worldwide are exposed to Christianity and how many want to become Christians, says Global Media Outreach's leader. Allan Beeber notes that this is also the first time missionaries can reach into dangerous countries and other hard-to-reach populations, such as teenagers here at home, without ever leaving their desks. What's more, online outreach can be specialized to target a variety of groups, from members of the military to hurricane victims. One group of pastors handles especially difficult theological questions, and most missionaries respond within 24 hours, Beeber said.

New frontier

Evangelicals are not the only ones turning to point-and-click proselytizing. Mormon missionaries spend 12 hours fielding questions online as part of their training before being dispatched around the world. Missionaries who can't go overseas for health reasons can instead put in a two-year stint at the Mormons' online referral center in Provo, Utah.

"Absolutely it's the new frontier," says Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Internet and American Life Project. "In advanced economies, the majority of people are online, and...they begin to think of the Internet as the default starting place for all kinds of information searches. So it's not surprising that when people have spiritual questions or have concerns about the direction of their lives, a lot of them...start their search for answers online."

Maria Rodriguez, a Campus Crusade accountant who heard about the project around the office, said sharing the gospel is now akin to "going on a mission trip without stepping out of the house." Rodriguez helps oversee the ministry's Spanish speakers and enjoys developing online relationships with those who write in, including a woman from Peru who is moving to Canada but worries about leaving behind her mother, who is in poor health. "We go back and forth, praying for each other, praying for her mother and her decision," says Rodriguez. "Mostly people want to be heard. They want to tell their stories.... The family of God is so huge that we can reach others from such a distance."

Red Sox player: faith sustains in cancer battle

BOSTON, Mass. (CNA) – Mike Lowell, third baseman for the Boston Red Sox, recently told a Catholic TV talk show that his faith has sustained him through his battle with cancer. And the foundation for that faith was laid by his parents when they took their children to church as family every Sunday. "I think that foundation was set in me at a young age, and I think I use it to help me out in times when things aren't going so good later on in my life." He added that his grandparents also influenced his faith.

Lowell is a Gold Glove winner, a four-time All Star and was the 2007 World Series Most Valuable Player. He was born in Puerto Rico but his family moved to Miami when he was three years old.

At age 24 Lowell was diagnosed with testicular cancer during a routine physical. The news struck him with fear. "[Cancer] is a very troubling word," he said, recalling that his grandmother had passed away from cancer about four years earlier. He immediately wondered, "Am I going to live or am I going to die?"

Lowell spoke of the comfort that came from knowing how many people were praying for him, "With all the support and all this faith that I had going behind me with my family and my friends, I feel like the cancer had no chance."

New priorities

Lowell learned to cling to God during the treatment when everything seemed in his life out of his control. "I'd say my faith was a major reason why I was able to overcome the cancer," he said. "I think especially in those times that are tough, if you have a faith that you can lean on, it definitely makes things a lot easier to cope with, and I think you take a more realistic approach."

The cancer experience made Lowell stop and re-examine his life. He realized that he needed to make his family and faith priorities in his life. Now, he says, he focuses on being a husband and father and sees baseball as "a piece of me and not the whole me."

In addition to reordering his priorities in life, Lowell has made an effort to reach out to others. After his recovery he and his wife set up the Mike Lowell Foundation to help children going through cancer. "Physically, emotionally, spiritually, it was the most trying thing I had ever gone through," Lowell recalled, noting all the struggles he went through even though knew he was financially secure.

He realized how difficult it must be for families with a member, particularly a child, undergoing cancer treatments when the family is not financially stable. "If we can financially help out that burden a little bit, I think it makes the whole process of going through cancer a little more do-able, and I think it allows the families to be a little bit more optimistic about their situation."

Lowell admitted that even as a professional baseball player, he still faces regular "bumps in the road." But despite the difficulties he has gone through, he is optimistic and grateful. "I don't view my life as all these tragic moments," he said. "I view my life as very fortunate."

As he shares his story with others, Lowell says it is important to remember that everyone goes through tough times, but that "you can find a positive in each obstacle and you can use it as motivation to either achieve a goal or to maximize your talents."

Now, Lowell is trying to share his precious gift of faith with his two children. "They're bound to go through things that are going to be tough for them," he said, explaining that he wants to give them support and strong foundation of faith to deal with those difficult times. "When all else fails, you'll always have your faith with you."

Education

Calvin College website offers writings in Christian education

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – On a web page which is part of its teacher education program, Calvin College has made available numerous "foundational writings" about Christian education to prospective and current teachers, and anybody else interested.

The web page, called "Writings in Christian Education," notes that many such writings from earlier years in Reformed Christian education were published (in print) as part of the Calvin College Monograph Series. Others were publications from the National Union of Christian Schools (founded in 1920 and called Christian Schools International since 1979). Still others were first made available in the *Christian Educator's Journal* (CEJ), a publication begun and maintained by Reformed Christians (and edited by *CC* editor Bert Witvoet).

"Unfortunately," the web page notes, "these documents have gone out of print." That's why the Calvin Education Department is putting some of them online for free in PDF format.

A solid foundation

Among the journal and essay titles available are these from the April 1971 bonus issue of CEJ: *Attempted Better Creeds*, *The School System and the Bible* and *Needed: An Educational Creed* by Donald Oppewal; *Confessing Christ in Education* by James Olthuis and Bernard Zylstra; *First Order Issues in Christian Philosophy of Education* by N.H. Beversluis; and *This We Believe* and *Principles in Education* by John VanderArk.

Among the more than a dozen other titles are *What School for Our Children?* by E. Heerema; *A Christian Perspective on the Teaching of Reading* by B. Bosma and K. Klok; *A Christian Theory of the Person* by C. Jarsma; and *Contrasting Christian Approaches to Teaching the Sciences by* Russell Maatman and G. Baker.

In addition, two books are available online: *A Vision with a Task*, edited by Gloria Goris Stronks and Doug Blomberg; and *The Christian Middle School: An Ethos for Caring* by Gloria Goris Stronks.

The web page can be found at *calvin.edu/academic/education/news/publications/monoweb*

CHEC: Christian higher ed is far more than 'Bible school'

Redeemer University College

Trinity Western University

Marian Van Til

OTTAWA – Most young Canadian Christians do not consider attending a Christian college or university when looking for a post-secondary educational institution.

"The phrase 'Christian higher education' means almost nothing to two thirds of Canadians, according to a national opinion poll commissioned by Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC)," reports Christianity.ca. "Most people could not name a single school that might fit with the phrase. However, once pollsters explained that the phrase included colleges and universities where all subjects are [taught] from a Christian perspective, most respondents said they would be willing to give 'some consideration' to such schools."

To change the perception that "Christian higher education" means attending a Bible school, CHEC recently produced a short video explaining what Christian post-secondary education is all about. It also launched a website to introduce potential students to programs in more than 50 subject areas offered by CHEC member schools.

For Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, begun by members of the Christian Reformed Church, getting the word "university" as an official part of its name has made a big difference, says Redeemer President Justin Cooper. He told Christianity.ca, "The new name does a better job of catching the attention of students looking for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education programs that Redeemer offers. Redeemer is also working to overcome perceptions that faith is private and does not belong in the public square, or that Christian universities are fundamentalist institutions." Cooper concluded, "Our experience has been positive. Once they discover we are not fulfilling their caricatures of narrow Evangelicals, they are quite willing to listen."

Students the best advertisement

Redeemer and all the CHEC academic institutions want to – and need to – overcome a perception that Christian higher education is "a second-rate option." Cooper asserts that Redeemer students can "go head to head" with those attending secular universities in terms of the quality of their education. In fact, he says, a Christian university will do a better job of educating because of its "holistic grasp."

Christianity.ca reports that the *The Globe and Mail* recently began including some CHEC members in its annual University Report Card feature. In fact, both Redeemer and The King's University College in Edmonton (the other

The King's University College

Reformed liberal arts university in Canada), along with Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., received A to A+ grades in every area considered. *The Globe* did not rank CHEC members that are not also members of the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada. (It also left out Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg even though it is an AUCC member.)

Christianity.ca pointed out that CHEC requires its member schools be accredited with a relevant professional association. That "prevents some of Canada's younger or smaller evangelical colleges, evangelism schools and schools for ministry from joining CHEC." In addition, CHEC requires its members to be affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, to agree with the EFC's faith statement and to require all faculty and staff to be Christians. That last employment policy requirement – a "no-brainer" for evangelical and Reformed institutions – prevents some of Canada's older, mainline seminaries from being members of Christian Higher Education Canada.

As important as those affiliations can be, Redeemer's Justin Cooper is convinced that the quality of the graduates of CHEC schools is their best advertisement. He told Christianity.ca, "It's a discussion starter and a prejudice stopper. Our graduates go into all kinds of careers. They are making a difference."

'Report Card': Evangelical ministries too cosy with public ed

COLUMBIA, S.C. (Christian Newswire) – Earlier this year at the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention in Nashville, a "report card" was issued to grade how effectively major evangelical Christian ministries and organizations in the U.S. support K-12 Christian education or home schooling. The NRB is the largest gathering of evangelical Christian leaders and media in the world.

Nine organizations were rated by Exodus Mandate, whose goal is to get evangelicals to see the importance of Christian education and to take their children out of public schools. Among the groups evaluated were Focus on the Family (founded by James Dobson) and Coral Ridge Ministries, begun at Florida's Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church by James Kennedy and known for the Evangelism Explosion program.

Chaplain E. Ray Moore, who presented the report card, asserted, "Even though these organizations have been valiantly fighting the 'culture war,' they have suffered terrible defeats. They have not been able to arrest and reverse the moral and cultural slide by protests, lobbying, voting and legislative remedies. It's time for these ministries to revisit their methodology and ask themselves if there is a biblical model for spiritual and cultural renewal."

Nine criteria were used to rate the ministries: promotes a Christian worldview; promotes Christian education K-12 and home schooling; warns about the dangers of public schools; urges children's exodus from public schools; teaches Christian education as a biblical imperative; does not advocate lobbying, voting, or legislation as the *primary* to affect cultural renewal; does not support the delusion that "public school reform" will resolve our spiritual and cultural crisis; does not misapply the biblical doctrine of "Salt and Light" to justify training Christian children in public schools; does not promote K-12 public schools as morally equivalent to Christian and home schools.

No theology of Christian ed

The nine ministries generally earned high scores for promoting a Christian worldview, for promoting K-12 Christian education or home schooling and for "warning about the dangers of public schools," but they received poor grades for "wasting their efforts on public-school reform," on justifying keeping Christian children in public schools to be salt and light, and on promoting a moral equivalence between K-12 public, Christian and home schools.

Moore said, "The failure in these criteria is largely due to the fact that some Christian ministries have not yet come to believe that there is an explicit biblical theology of Christian education in the Holy Scriptures. These same ministries have promoted a Christian worldview, and many Christian families, taking this teaching to its logical conclusion, have now outstripped the ministries."

Dr. Bruce Shortt, Houston attorney and author of *The Harsh Truth About Public Schools*, commented, "The Report Card is a good idea to serve as a wake up call for ministries, churches and pastors. Exodus Mandate should rate the major Christian denominations next and then rate the seminaries and large Christian radio or TV teaching ministries, too."

Church Lady Chicken Supreme

Daphne Simpkins

When a man who had studied cooking in Switzerland showed up at the same potluck dinner party carrying basically the same type of Chicken Supreme casserole I had also prepared, I gulped.

As Don whisked his dish out of its thermal sleeve, his casserole was placed in the middle of the other foods, a place of honor as the major entree.

No one told him right away that I had also brought Chicken Supreme, only mine didn't have broccoli in it. His did. Not big chunks of broccoli – the florets. Don's broccoli had been food processed. I could see all the parts of his chicken dish through his clear Pyrex dish, and everything looked balanced, including the delicate cracker crumbs he had sprinkled on top.

"How did you get your cracker crumbs so fine?" I asked humbly. His casserole was amazingly neat.

He shrugged artlessly, not inclined to answer my questions about his recipe. Good cooks often don't like to answer questions. It's part of their mystique. I imagined there was an extensive code of cooking tips Don had picked up in Switzerland where chocolate is revered the same way we Southerners value grits.

To fill the awkward silence, I explained my technique: "I pour the tubes of Ritz crackers in a Ziploc bag, and beat them with my fist. It's quite a stress reducer," I added honestly.

"I did not use Ritz crackers," he sniffed, as if my cracker lacked social status. "They are so loaded with fat."

He mumbled the name of some cracker I didn't know that he had specially selected for his dish. I didn't know that they made crackers I didn't know.

About that time, the hostess appeared with my casserole, which had needed warming in the oven because I don't have one of those thermal sleeves that fits a Pyrex dish. Besides, I hadn't used a Pyrex dish. If you want to go home before the eating is finished, you have to leave behind the dish, and that means the hostess has to wash it and get it back to you. Out of respect for one another, church ladies use disposable tin foil pans to make meal deliveries easy and clean up simple.

We church ladies have a number of cooking techniques that we willingly tell anyone who will listen. It's not exactly testifying, but we do talk about food – how to cook it, how to carry it – and if we bought our ingredients on sale we'll tell you where to go and how much money you will save, God willing.

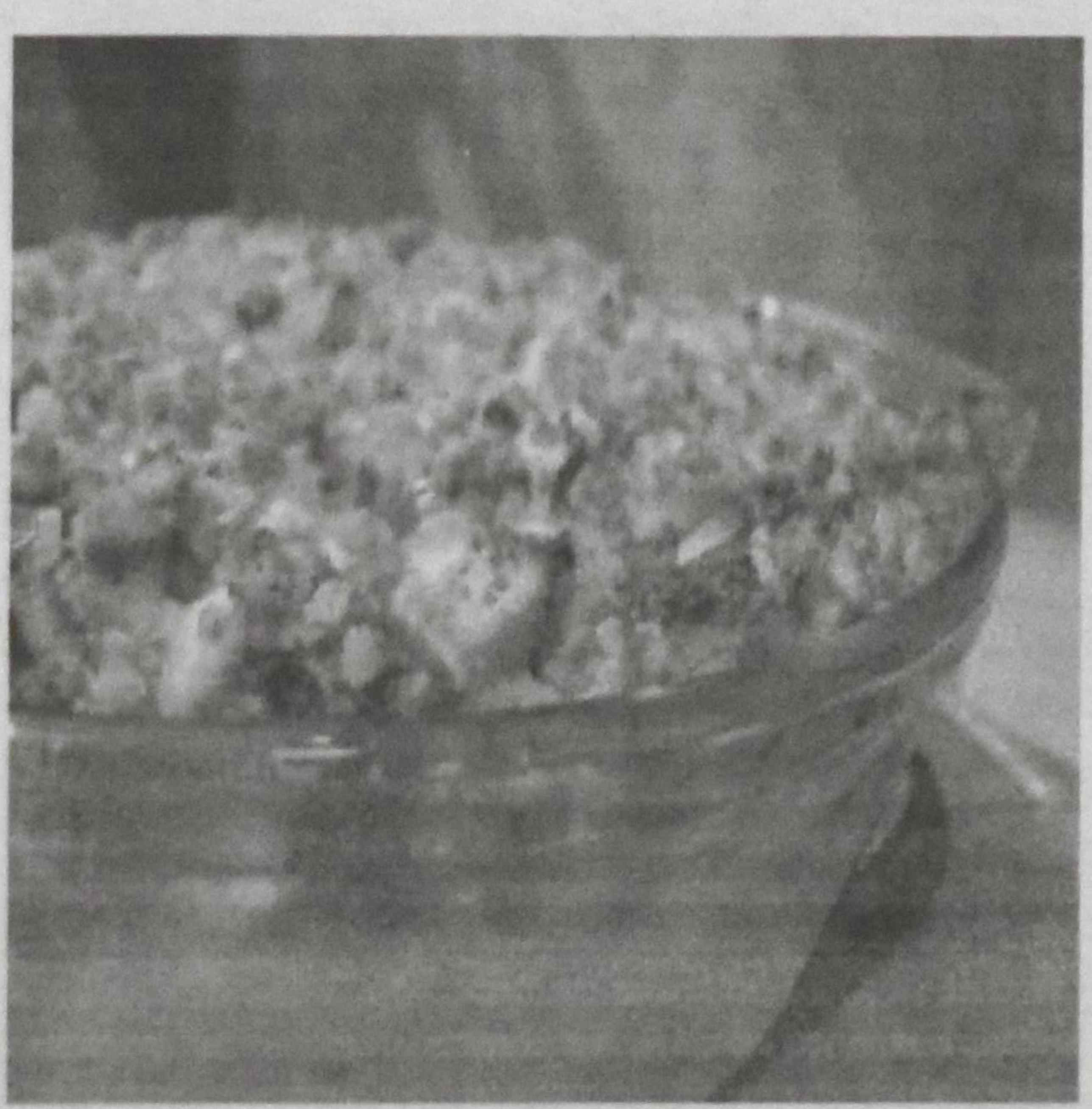
I had actually considered using a real glass dish because Chicken Supreme is a heavy entrée, and when I saw the hostess burning her hands a little in order to keep my casserole from dripping, I almost regretted the tin pan. She managed, however, and was able to slide my Chicken Supreme casserole onto the table, positioning my concoction like a bridesmaid next to the bride, which was Don's artistically beautiful dish of Chicken Supreme.

In that moment, I was no longer just a guest at a potluck dinner. I was in a spontaneous cook-off contest with someone who outranked me by both education, reputation, and a cookin' attitude from a foreign country. This tension doesn't usually occur in my daily life where church ladies use the same recipe and compare notes about how big or small to make a dish depending on how many people will need to be fed.

There was twice as much casserole as was needed for the crowd, and I was prepared to lose gracefully – that is, to take home my uneaten casserole – but, to my surprise, it wasn't necessary. Soon, complimentary murmurs were heard amongst the diners who compared notes, "I'm going back for more of hers."

Since I had heard that refrain more than once, so did Don.

We met each other in the kitchen, where he stated the conclusion. "Yours is not a fat-free recipe, is it?" he confirmed, crossing his arms.



I cut my eyes at him in horror, as if he had asked me the nature of my most recent worst sin. "Or course not." Church ladies may cook fat-free at home but not in public.

"You used real sour cream, didn't you?" he stated next.

"Absolutely," I said.

"I didn't. Mine's low-fat."

"I am so sorry," I said, shaking my head in commiseration. I felt for him. It could have happened to anyone. "Your casserole is very pretty though, and that cloth cover you brought it in, well, it's a very well-dressed dish."

I did not explain that I had mistakenly bought fat-free Cream of Chicken soup as one of the primary ingredients of my sauce, and upon reading that Healthy Heart message on the can, I added an extra container of sour cream to make up for that goof. I'd also melted some real butter and drizzled it over the Ritz crackers and it had thinned the sour cream. As a result, my casserole was very soupy, which is why I had also brought along some big fat rolls. A big fat roll can sop up melted sour cream.

No one had needed a bread sponge with Don's casserole, which he was able to neatly return to his special carrying cover.

As I was preparing to leave, the hostess asked me if I wanted to take my limp, messy pan home. I looked at the single cup of remaining goopy casserole and the battered Ritz crackers. "If you don't mind, just toss it in the trash."

"I'll be putting that in my refrigerator for lunch tomorrow," she vowed, silently calculating if there was enough to share with her husband. There wasn't.

Another friend asked me if I would make that dish for her son's wedding reception. "Sure," I said.

"There will be about a hundred people," she added, surprised by my willingness to cook for her. We weren't close, but that doesn't matter: if you are in a church for whatever reason a seasoned church lady will help out in the kitchen and volunteer her friends to help out too.

"Not a problem. I'll round up some girls, and we'll make the dish for you," I promised.

We would, too. And we would serve it in our silver-plated chafing dishes that sit on top of those little burning candles. It looks pretty like that. (Nobody understands a wedding reception the way church ladies do or knows more surely that you not only need the help of your friends to make a wedding happen, you rely upon the kindness of acquaintances. When a wedding is afoot, it's all hands on deck!)

Don, a man unschooled in church lady cooking wisdom, listened intently. He didn't understand what was going on at all.

So as we made our good-byes, I whispered a type of tip about cooking that we ladies pass around to each other in our society where good recipes are a gift we freely give one another. "Don, as a general rule, most people don't like broccoli," I explained softly. "No matter how finely you chop it up."

*Daphne Simpkins (DaphneSimpkins@Prodigy.net) lives in Montgomery, AL and often writes about the life of church ladies in **The Adventures of Mildred Budge**.*

TOO OLD TO PLAY ?

Vein-drawn, hers
slender pale wrinkled hands
with knobbly fingers, fly lightly over
the yellowed ivory.
softly and tenderly the melody
whispers of sacred secrets,
then grows into the cheerful babble
of a creek reaching out to the river,
racing towards the immense ocean,
filling the ancient small church
with a jubilating Hallelujah,
then
as if by command ,
the silent crowd stands,and burst out with their heartfelt chant
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah!

Lini R.Grol

Profile

Blind author undertakes life dream

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Blind author and teacher Kathy Nimmer, 39, has embarked on a venture that hasn't, to her knowledge, been undertaken before. *Christian Courier* interviewed Nimmer to learn more about her life, her faith and her evolving project.

How did you become blind?

When I was seven years old, I started having difficulty seeing the chalkboard in school. Five eye doctors said I was fabricating a vision problem to get attention. My parents took me to one more doctor. He noticed tiny areas on my retina that were dying. I was sent to the University of Chicago as a research patient and was diagnosed with a rare retinal degenerative disease. Over the course of sixteen years, it took all of my sight except for a small portion of unreliable light perception, which I still have.

Where did you receive your education, and where do you work now?

I went to a school for the blind through high school. Then I went to Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, for my English education degree, and, later, to Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, where I earned my Masters in English. I've been teaching English and creative writing since 1992 at Harrison High School in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Describe your current project, *Two Plus Four Equals One.*

I am creating a full-length anthology of stories, anecdotes, tributes and poems about service dogs who help people with disabilities such as blindness, deafness, autism, mobility impairments and other challenges. I want to write and edit this comprehensive book, including materials from people with disabilities, but also puppy raisers, breeders, trainers, and anyone who has observed or interacted with service dogs – people from all around the world. *Two Plus Four Equals One* testifies to what happens when two hands/feet/eyes/ears join with four paws to make one magical union.

What inspired you to undertake this project?

I currently am working with my third guide dog and have plenty of my own stories. These include times of unity, joy, humour and the "woo-hoo" moments of empowerment. But there also are struggles, disappointments, fears and sorrows. Some people think these dogs never make mistakes and are in charge of the partnership. I want to dispel those myths, too, revealing the truth of the working relationship and how perfectly imperfect the dogs are, just like their handlers. I want to educate, inspire, and pay tribute to all who are part of this magnificent process. I want to do so with truth and candor, letting the stories speak for themselves as evidence of this incredible partnership.

How is your project funded?

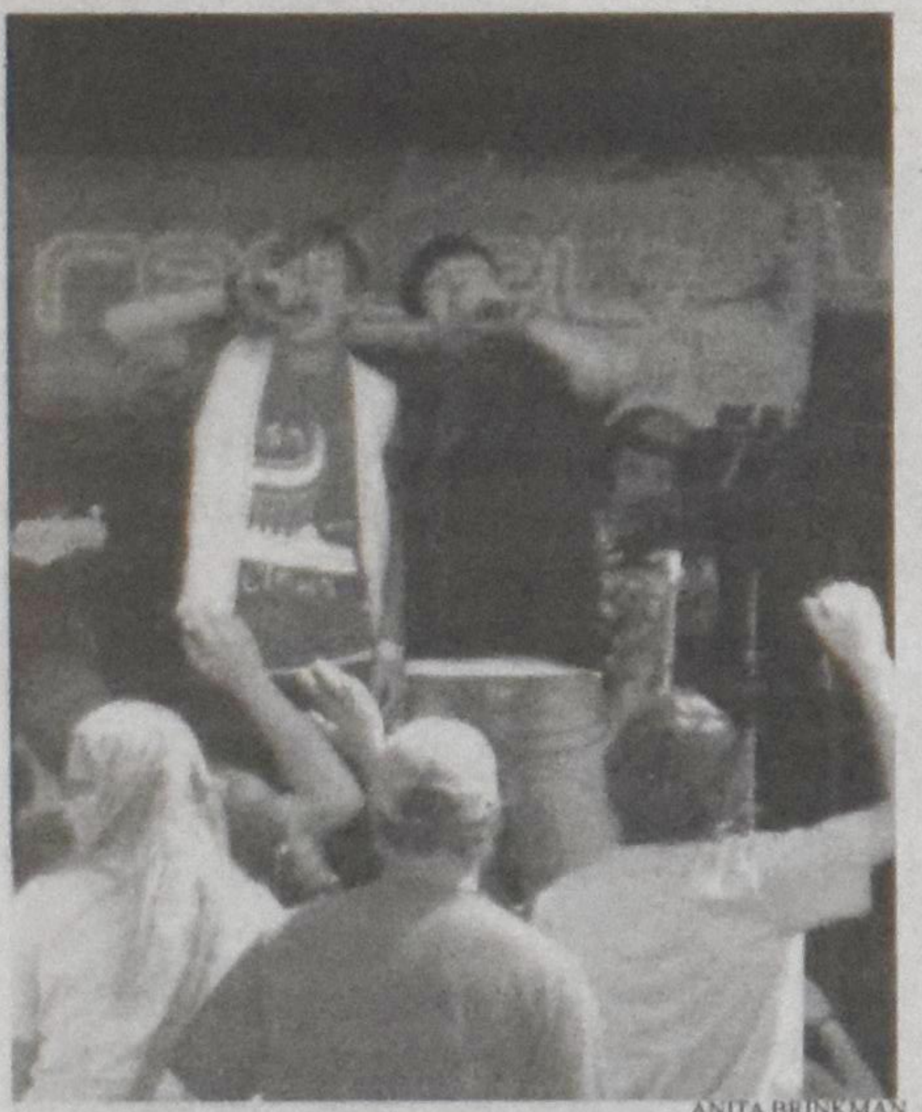
I was named a Lilly Endowment Distinguished Fellow in February of 2009, as one of only nine educators in the state of Indiana to receive a $25,000 grant to undertake a life's dream. Without the support of the Lilly Endowment, this project would not be possible.

How are you promoting the project and collecting the stories necessary for its success?

The project is centered around my web site, http://www.servicedogstories.com

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema (sonyavf55 @hotmail.com.) is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, ON.

Refuel Fest 2009 praises God despite challenges



ANITA BRINKMAN

Anita Brinkman

The population of the small Ontario town of Delhi nearly doubled for one day as thousands of music lovers gathered to hear nine bands praise and perform at Refuel Fest 2009 on Saturday, June 13. The event, in its second year, happened on the soccer field of Delhi District Secondary School, but brought together bands from countries as far as Sweden and Australia. The bands performed from a covered outdoor stage while those who attended the concert crowded in front of the stage, relaxed in lawn chairs, or enjoyed the music from a distance while playing frisbee, volleying a ball around with friends, or perusing the displays of various Christian organizations present at the event.

ANITA BRINKMAN

(above) A member of the band Starting from Scratch signs the shirt of fan Felicia Nydam (left) Blue Eyes Soul, of Sweden, performs

Diverse styles of Christian music, from funk to worship to rock to hip hop, were represented at the event, which included such popular bands as Newworldson, Blue Eyes Soul, Article One, and Manafest. Band members interacted with the crowd through the day, and after each band's set on stage, they welcomed long lines of fans seeking autographs, photos with the bands, posters, or CDs. Throughout the day, those in attendance enjoyed an atmosphere of fun, community, and worship. The feeling of community may have been the result of people's knowledge of some serious challenges faced by event organizers, Chris Ney and his team from Off the Street Ministries, a ministry to youth in Delhi. Originally, the event was to have been a two-day festival with some very big names in Christian music participating: Third Day, Britt Nicole, and Skillet, to name a few. Ney pointed to the current economic situation and its impact on would-be sponsors of the event as the cause of the last-minute changes in the line-up. Several sponsors who had committed to the festival before the economic downturn were simply unable to contribute what they had hoped. As a result Refuel Fest was not able to fulfil the contracts made with several of the bands, who then graciously allowed them to back out of the contracts with no penalty. After Third Day's performance was canceled, the Refuel team made the difficult decision to cancel Friday's portion of the event and make adjustments to Saturday's schedule. Of the bands that did come to perform, Ney said, "The ones who are here have a 100 percent ministry focus. They love the Gospel....They're not about hype or showmanship. Their focus is the Gospel. That's what we want with the festival, and God brought together the best bands for that."

Refuel Fest got its start last year when Off the Street Ministries hosted the Christian band, Starting from Scratch. The enthusiastic response of the youth group to that event prompted the Off the Street team to begin planning a sort of "battle of the bands." They planned a fun contest of local bands with perhaps one professional band to headline the event. Through a series of connections only God could make, very popular Georgia band Casting Crowns headlined, and other popular bands rounded out the concert. This year the team put together this year's Refuel in Ontario, and have plans to put on an event in Calgary, Alberta, on August 28-29.

While the Refuel team has been busy planning this year's event since September, their real focus and what takes more of their time, is their youth group. Any profits made from Refuel Fest have gone back into this youth group. The festival got its start as an outreach event, and that has remained its focus. "The goal of Refuel," says Ney, "is outreach: to get people excited about the Gospel, to hear the message. This year we've heard about four new commitments to Christ already. That's very exciting. That's worth it." The day is intentionally family-friendly. Ney comments, "There's a cross-section of everything. Parents and youth and community can all get something out of it. That kind of sets it apart from other events of this kind." By the end of the day, forty people had made new commitments to Christ.

Off the Street Ministries has definite plans to continue hosting Refuel Fest. Those interested in volunteering or sponsoring the event for next year can visit the Refuel Fest website <www.refuelfest.ca> and use the "contact us" link to email their thoughts to the organizers

Jumping from one reality to another

If there is a natural body,
there is also a spiritual body.
I Corinthians 15:44b

A.A. VanRuler

The above is a typical pronouncement by the apostle Paul: on the one hand quite brief and on the other rather spunky, even reckless. This, after all, is not such a small jump. He begins with what is given, with what is visible, what we experience today, and then from that he concludes that if this natural body exists and therefore can exist, then the spiritual body can exist, too, and therefore does.

So the apostle finds his starting point in what is most obvious: our bodily *existence.* He finds his anchor in just that: the natural body is there. It has *possibility.*

Whatever the relationship is between the bodily aspect and the psychological, nobody knows. How they both can exist, beside and with and in each other, no one can fathom in the least.

However, the reality is there even if not understood or known by people. That reality is at least lived and experienced by people. Mankind is its own reality. Even that is such an amazingly solid fact. The mystery is not simply in the fact of their relationship and in their being together. No, the mystery is already fully present in the fact that there is *something* and not *nothing.* Yes, matter itself is an eminent mystery. That that matter is "body-ness" as well and that that "body-ness" is permeated by the soul, yes, those are mysteries as well, but they play second-fiddle. *There is something, and there is not nothing;* that is the fundamental mystery. That must be our starting point. That is a solid fact.

God spoke, therefore I am

Well, it must be understood that this, too, is an expression of faith. The duo of soul and body, "body-ness" itself and the fact that there is something rather than nothing, can all be valued quite differently. One could say that all of it is projection. One could also say that all of it is only an appearance or an image or veil. Then all of being is then in essence a *non-being.*

That kind of thinking is present today in all its different forms. In recent centuries it has found its greatest expression in Buddhism. But Paul is an Israelite. Moreover, he is an Israelite who, from his own experience, knows about the resurrection of Christ. As an Israelite, he believes in God the Creator. That already gives him an indestructible experience of reality. The reality of mankind and mankind's experience was created by God – called into being, a desired and established reality, *real reality.* For an Israelite's consciousness there is a hint of blasphemy when one holds forth that being is only a projection or appearance. We are really there. We are not an evil dream of an evil spirit that does not exist.

For Paul, Christ's resurrection amounts to a seal having been placed on our belief in creation and, consequently, our consciousness of reality. Now I can no longer doubt that I am there, for in Christ's resurrection it has become evident to me that, without a doubt, it was God's intent that I would be existing forever.

We must not allow this Israelite and apostolic belief to be taken away from us. It does not only refer to the bodily resurrection of Christ. It refers to us as well. The one who gives up on the Christian faith does not just lose the reality of the resurrected Lord and the reality of God. Those people, in principle, must also relinquish their own and their world's reality. In that case not only God and Christ are projections of the imagination, but also mankind and the world. Those, too, must be relinquished. At long last all of being will be revealed and inflated as *non-being.* All that is involved with being a Christian.

But Paul is an Israelite and an apostle of the resurrection. His solid foundation is that we are there, and that we are there bodily, and that we are there in the harmonious two-in-one-ness of body and soul. There is a natural body, i.e., a body with a psyche. Then there is also a spiritual body. That is the courageous conclusion he draws from that solid foundation. "If there is a natural body, then there is a spiritual body as well."

We are the mystery

What is the basis here of the apostle's conclusion? I am inclined to think that there are a whole lot of entwined considerations here.

For example, there is this: The body is there as a fact. It *can* therefore be there, and it can be there as a dwelling and organ of the soul. Why could it not then also be there as temple and instrument of the Spirit? The Spirit, after all, is much stronger than the soul! If it is possible and real that the soul controls and directs the body, then it is even more possible and real that the Spirit does the same – and more – and in a different fashion.

Moreover, we must think about God. He is the Creator, has willed us into being and is faithful to his creation. He will not let go of it, not even if, through our own fault, it is surrendered to decay, shame and death. He comes to its aid and redeems it. Would God surrender something like body-ness being the unique aspect of his created reality? Certainly not!

But we need not put this statement in the form of a sure reasoning or conclusion. We may, instead, bring it in the form of an apostolic message. God has proved, after all, that he does not leave in the lurch that which he has created in all its physical-ness. He has raised Christ from the dead into eternal life, in a spiritual, i.e., in a body that is controlled and directed by the Spirit.

Of course, we don't know how that is possible and what that exactly is. To begin with, we don't even really know what it means that in this life the soul controls and directs the body. The resurrected Christ is as much a mystery as a living human being. And the resurrection is as big a mystery as creation itself. But we *are* the one thing, the mystery of creation, and we *hear* about the other, the mystery of the resurrection.

One day…

Today, in the "now", they do not fit together very well. We share in Christ's resurrection and his eternal life. Even the Spirit has been given to us. But we still are, and we are still *in* our natural body.

They don't fit together very well, do they? The Spirit dwells in us, but this indwelling is accompanied by a great deal of strife, the struggle of the Spirit and the flesh.

One day there must be a solution to that problem, that struggle between the Spirit and our body. There is something unnatural about it. That also is one of Paul's considerations. He assumes that harmony is natural and disharmony unnatural. It is for that reason that he says that there *must* be a spiritual body, a body in harmony with the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of fulfillment. Typically, it is *his* task to bring all of created reality to its final destination. The Spirit's goal has been attained only when the body is no longer the carrier of the soul, but of the Spirit. Then the body will have become a *spiritual* body.

Translated by Bram Hoff.
Bram lives in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.

As a baker

As a baker she's a maker in a holy tradition   the daughter
of a farm daughter from Manitoulin   bringing delicacies to my mouth
Her fingertips understand the transformation of flour   to
dough   to flaky pastry   & how to stir my attention
She makes music with raspberry & blueberry   with strawberry
rhubarb & cherry   takes the humble apple   spy cortland   mutsu &
macintosh & mystically   with perfectly unmeasured cinnamon
bakes wonders
She wakes my senses   makes sweet squares at Christmas
brings forth fruit pies   cobblers & crisps   in season   or draws
delicacies from the deep freeze   a large serving of summer   cooled a
long age in winter's deep well
She shakes my appetites alive   with tastes & textures on my
tongue   For my sake she'll shake & roll & sprinkle sweetness in her
kitchen alchemy   She knows the way to a man's stomach   is through
his heart   making me receptive to all she has to bring   tuning my palate
to her particular talents   developing my dependency on her presence
her smile   her voice

D.S. Martin

Martin, D.S. POIEMA. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008.

Speak – Write
Paula Warkentin

Because I

STAY AWAY
Was what her hair did say
All green and spiked 'til sharp
Her eyes lined pink with tenderness
Hiding out under bags that were dark

A skeleton face bright green is the patch
She wears on the arm of her coat
Florescent with terror
Charcoaled circles are the eyes
Warning onlookers to stop and take note

Of who she is or do you care
Your reason for looking – to stop and stare?
Her frame small and girlish
Her boots hard and black
Tough leathered for protection
Against potential attack

Her army jacket khaki-ed rough
A militaristic image
Leave a covering for an inside
That is actually diminished

And invisible or so it seems
To be so big in nothing
The sense of emptiness embodied
By a look that tries to say something

Out loud – to deafness of the crowd
The audience she wants to hear applaud
And say well done I accept who you are
But the truth (inside her) cannot see that far

Away from everyone she sits
At the front up against the corner
Tightly-squared-shoulders-squeezed
Her face blatantly spits
Leave me alone! I'll keep myself warmer!

Than the blanket you wear behind your eyes
That sees only the outside of me
And doesn't stop to wonder why
I would dress like this – every day – indefinitely
And the other ones (you know) who only wear black
And powder their faces palely white
Like a mask that sits over skin that says death
With circulation that doesn't look right

It's a sign – that life is slipping away
And their desire to dream has flown by
And the wings of the bird that once carried those
Hopes have learned how to smother the cries

When pain is far too much to bear
And no one stops to show they care
But stand open gazed and indifferently stare
It makes one wonder if (they're) even aware

Of the garment SHE sees when looking at all
The eyes that question her motives
And a frowning brow that cover the thoughts
Candidly racing like a locomotive

Train – that does not stop – to see who's
Standing by – or take the time to notice
Luggage carried by a small, small child
Whose frame is just too fragile to hold this

Nor brace the weight of the load she bears
Her back fully bent quickly move our stare(s)
From dormant silence (to words) action-ed in care
That stop to ask "Do you need help over there?"

Pierced full of holes – the pain running out
Still – not enough release
Is the reason – nose- ears- brows- and –tongues
Warrant anesthetic police

SHE wears COLOUR
In this world of grey and beige
Disguised as though nothing is wrong
Where "I'm okay" means I'm dying
And "I love you" means I won't
Well, at least NOT for very long

Net stockings remind her of what she's got left
Holes mean something was actually once there
And only slipped through the openings
That gap – from an attitude – that left a tare
BECAUSE I had not stopped to ask her
How she was or where she was headed
But instead I sat in silence
Cold, despondent and stiff-neck-ed

Not the qualities – of THE ONE who says
Come unto me – all - who are heavy laden
And I will give you (true) rest – that this world
Offers only in the name of Satan

God's waters of life wash away every stain
And covering caked-on over years
And tend to the cracks and dried openings
Turned hard from a lack of tears

Released and allowed to flow as they ought
And stop long enough to rest
On the arm of THE ONE who stands and waits
For His child TO COME NEAR to His breast.

Paula is a poet, writer, lover of outcasts and wife of Kenny Warkentin. They live in Winnipeg. One of her greatest passions is to grow in the art of dancing with words.
© by Paula Warkentin.

The Liberal Artist
Brian Dijkema

Traditional by nature

Debates over tradition have become commonplace enough to take on the role of a tradition itself. This is especially true in churches, but equally true in a host of other institutions. To be frank, they tend to be rather poor debates. Not always, mind you, but often.

One reason for the frustrating nature of these debates is that the concept of tradition, and the rhetoric which flies around in such brouhahas in defence or opposition to "traditional" modes of thought, action or being, is fundamentally misunderstood. If one looks around at the various debates in which these two sides are represented, you typically find two conceptions of tradition.

Superficial reverence

The first equates tradition with a concern for things which have been superseded by the newer and the better.

Yes, there are times when tradition gets resurrected, at least in theory. Culture from the past is viewed as a quaint relic to be dusted off and brought out for a round of nostalgic revelry — often a great short term commercial gig — before returning to its place in the basement (think here of the success of Mamma Mia!). Other traditions are noted in curatorial fashion on a whirlwind tour to the present (think here of the treatment that the Middle Ages get in most modern history text books). In both cases, tradition is given some semblance of respect, but the resurrection of the tradition in question looks more like a well-made-up zombie than Lazarus.

What is important is now, and we must understand today in order to live the good life.

Past as normative

Another view of tradition places that which is old or from the past on a pedestal and establishes the practices, art, thought and the like as the norms by which all else today is measured. There is often a nod to the importance of the realities of the current day and age, but the typical posture is to respond by trying to cram the new things into the old.

Both ignore a key aspect of reality: namely that tradition is itself a dynamic thing and that dynamism — change, progression — is irretrievably connected to that which is established, regularly practiced and embodied by those before us. In many cases, both the defenders and opponents of tradition are actually quite similar. In both cases, a fetish is made of the past or the present, and the complexity of reality is suppressed by the standards of the progressives or conservatives. More importantly, they ignore the complexity of what it means to be truly human.

The past matters

How do reformational types understand tradition?

On the one hand, one might be tempted to say that reformational types are anti-traditional. After all, what was the Reformation but an all-out assault on tradition, particularly the tradition as established by the church in Rome? In the Reformation, at best, tradition was made subservient to Scripture, at worst, attempts were made to abolish it all together, sometimes with violence; more revolutionary than reformational.

On the other hand, anyone familiar with Martin Luther, or the writings of John Calvin will see that both were steeped rather deeply in tradition and were extremely keen to note that their project was one of recovery, not revolution. A brief look through Calvin's *Institutes* reveals footnote after footnote to the church fathers, and he states again and again his concern for maintaining the vitality of the faith, as handed down from Christ to the apostles to his own time. But what about today? What about reformationals today? How acquainted are we with the sources of the present?

If, like me, you think that a proper conception of tradition, and, equally important, proper *traditions* are extremely important to the vitality of any institution, from a family to a church to a country, what things do you think need to be recovered? What is new today that needs a fresh approach?

Brian Dijkema (bdijkema@gmail.com) works for the Christian Labour Association of Canada and studies political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies.

Columns

Getting Unstuck
Arlene Van Hove

A 'Thin Place' ... paradise regained?

"Clothing is optional in their hot tub?" one of my daughters asks me as she is looking through a brochure of the popular retreat centre I visited last year.

"Are you sure this is where you stayed last year spring?" she asks disbelievingly.

"Yes," I reply nonchalantly.

"You're a grandparent now, not a flower kid of the '60s with no responsibilities!" she reminds me.

I shrug my shoulders and decide not to tell her I had responsibilities since the age of eight.

"Advertising is about catching people's attention," I remind her. "Obviously, it works." Still, I decide to put her mind at rest, "I have never seen anyone naked in the hot tub during the times I have been there … of course…there could have been a few on the beach," I add playfully.

"Just the idea…" she protests.

I relent and explain, "The "optional" issue is more about Hollyhock's history than anything else. The property was previously owned by a family and several adults whose young children went skinny dipping on hot summer days. The founders of Hollyhock thought they would continue the tradition."

"Oh really," she says.

I shrug and tell her, "Historical fact. But it's interesting we are having this discussion since this plot of land is probably the closest I will ever get to the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lost their naked innocence." I continue, "I guess we're just not redeemed enough to regain paradise lost."

Thin places

Call me naïve, but I was unaware of this aspect of Hollyhock located on Cortes Island. B.C. when I came to its rugged shores a decade ago, sometimes to attend a workshop, other times to just seek refuge from modern life. Still, I find it interesting my daughter questions the appropriateness of me being there when in fact this place has become my "thin place." There are no words to describe the serenity and hope I experience when I am there. The organic garden with its blooming perennials and an abundance of healthy vegetables during summer and fall simply soothes my senses. And while the gentle sea breezes and warm sunny rays mingle comfortably with the seasonal scents, the vistas nourish my soul. Towering cedars and Douglas firs with green crisp sallal covering the forest floor seem to stand guard over what was once an ancient First Nations gathering ground. The rippled sand of the lunar tides lays bare the wide-open expanse of its crescent shaped beach covered with driftwood tossed far and wide onto its shores by gales and storms. But, it is when the sun sets and the evening glow bursts over the mountain tops and spills across the gentle rhythm of the waves on the shore that I feel the veil between the "ordinary" and the "sacred" lift and catch a glimpse of God.

Some time ago, author Kathleen Norris used the term "spiritual geography" to describe the way a place can speak to our souls (a theme she explores in her book *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*). But the metaphor of "thin places" I am using here belongs to Celtic Christianity, a form of Christianity that flourished in Ireland and parts of Scotland, Wales and northern England beginning in the fifth century. During the last few decades, Celtic Christianity has been rediscovered, and hundreds of people now flock to the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland because it is considered a classic "thin place" where the ordinary visible world and the sacred spirit meet.

The heart matters

But for Thomas Merton the idea of thin places is much more than a geographical location. He believed a thin place is anywhere our hearts are opened and the physical mingles with the sacred. It can be in nature, in the arts such as music, poetry, literature, and dance, as well as in events and experiences or even in people (for sure Jesus was such a person). For Merton, a street corner in downtown Louisville became a thin place. Sometimes illness, suffering and grief can become thin places…not always of course, but sometimes our hearts are broken open by such experiences. Aging also seems to play a role in cracking the armored heart. The older I am becoming the more I am able to open up my heart. Unfortunately, it was not always so.

More about closed hearts next month.

Arlene Van Hove (avanhove@shaw.ca) is a therapist and a member of the Fleetwood CRC.

An appeal to all Christians

If anyone is in Christ, he or she is a New Creation; the old has gone, the new has come.
2 Corinthians 5:17

Bert Hielema

Isn't that an amazing statement: those who are in Christ are new creations. What does it actually mean?

Jesus says somewhere that we should not put new wine into old wineskins, because these used containers might not be leak proof, creating the possibility that this precious drink – wine was Israel's national beverage – could seep out and that would be a terrible waste.

Well, the same is true for being a New Creation: it just won't do to place such a person in an environment where it simply would be out of place: a New Creation can thrive only in a new environment.

Look at the world we live in. To the unskilled eye it looks to be in fairly good shape, but on closer look here's where we are now: We live in a world that is fraught with problems, burdened with debt, both monetary and environmental. We also constantly live under the shadow of nuclear war, of global warming, of oil depletion, of unemployment, of mortgage foreclosure, even of a pandemic, which may rapidly spread when the real flu season starts in the fall. Frankly the general outlook, from whatever angle, is dismal, as deficits get bigger and hyper inflation – or worse, deflation – cannot be ruled out. By all accounts we live in a different world.

Bill Ford, executive chairman of Ford Motor Co. recently remarked that "It is more and more clear that what worked in the 20th Century will not work in the 21st Century." That is also true for the church: Paul's statement that "those who are in Christ are a New Creation" means something different today than it did in his time or even a decade ago.

A good time

Times are never better for us Christians than now because the world experiences "change and decay" everywhere, and has no clue what to do, while there is a definite Christian solution.

The current situation is historic because we are witnessing the decline and fall of Capitalism, in spite of valiant efforts by the money-men of our times, which include most politicians, to put our Humpty-Dumpty Money System together again. We are now in that curious in-between time, where matters can go either way: renewal or chaos, redemption or disintegration, rebirth or death.

Uncertainty brings golden opportunities. The world is screaming for answers now that the old ways have been found wanting. Of course, as fanatics are apt to do when matters are failing, they redouble their efforts, as can be seen in the multiple stimulus packages that will only aggravate the already precarious state of finances. More growth leads to more pollution, faster resource depletion and quicker climate change.

The Bible is our guide here. It is not a history book, and does not give us specific outlines on how to invest money; yet, it directs us in a certain way that helps us in changing circumstances. What was true for my Christian grandparents' time holds no water today. Their daily code of conduct was very strict: no dancing, no card playing, no cinema attendance, no Sunday work of any kind, but twice to church. At the same time they generated a lot of entertainment themselves: wind instrument bands, choirs, young people societies. And they lived very structured lives. Then Christians were easily recognized by their simple, perhaps simplistic, customs. Today Christians cannot be recognized in any way. Yet we *should* stand out, and the way we live *should* provide answers, for the simple reason that the Way of the World has become the Way of Death.

The Bible's answer

The Bible is the book of Salvation, which means that it tells us that God created the world, that we, ever since Adam and Eve, have been busy un-creating it, and that Jesus stopped that process so that we – under Jesus' guidance – can again help God to keep creating.

Today we have reached a crucial junction where we either join the forces of destruction and so dig our own graves, or participate in preparing for a New World by being A New Creation.

For a person to be a New Creation, to be in Christ, fully, one hundred percent, means that we must also live in a new creation, must strive to create conditions that resemble the New World to come. I realize that this goes directly against the current thinking in the North American Church. One missionary, Craig Sorley in Kenya, trying to encourage green practices there (he was quoted in the June 20, 2009, issue of the *Globe and Mail*) writes, "The deeply embedded view (in the church) is that Christ is returning soon, so why should we care about the environment?" That is the 20th-century church speaking.

The 21st-century Christian view is exactly the opposite: precisely *because* Christ's return is imminent, we should deeply care about God's earth. Martin Luther, the church reformer, once said: "If I knew that Christ would come back tomorrow, I would still plant a tree today." We can no longer call ourselves "in Christ" unless we also live our lives "In Christ," that is, in a place that resembles, as closely as possible, the world that is to come. Not heaven, but a renewed earth is our final destination.

Remember we cannot do anything without Christ, but Christ will not do anything without us. After all we are "heirs of the Kingdom – the New Creation – and co-heirs with Christ."

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, ON. His website is http:hielema.ca

Bienke: my story (Part III)

This is the third part of the life of Jacobina Wilhelmina Radsma, née Vlaar, as told to her daughter Marion. The series will continue in following issues.

Childhood memories

When my brother Joe and I were very young, we were always excited when our opoe came for sleep-over visits and we always got up early in the morning – maybe four or five a.m. – to snuggle with her in the living room *bedstee,* the built-in bedstead she was always given. Then we would pull eagerly at her, "Opoe, tell us a story, tell us a rhyme." And she always did:

Aaltje zat op een paaltje
En het paaltje brak
En Aaltje viel
In de koeiekak
(Allie sat on a little pole, and the pole broke, and Allie fell into the cowshit.)

When she was finished, we all three would shout with laughter, opoe just as hard as we little kids did. Then she would tell us to shush, everyone else was sleeping. My parents were sleeping in a matching bedstee on the other side of the living room. But we would ask again for a story, and she would retell the same story. Sometimes she told it to us four or five times in a row, and we would howl with laughter every time!

When I was young, we all went to catechism classes. I also attended gym classes, joined the choir and participated in girls' Bible study groups. That covered about the whole of the week. No wonder our father would say, "When are you girls ever home in the evenings?" I can't say anything else but that we had a wonderful youth. All of us had lots of friends and stayed at each others' houses on Sundays. But we also had to go twice to church on Sunday. No staying home unless we had a very good reason, such as serious sickness – bad colds did not count. No loafing around during the week, either, no sleeping in even after a successful party or late night. My father would say, *Bij nacht de man, bij dag de man.* (By night the man, by day the man); if you cannot keep up with late nights, you better get in time to bed and that was that.

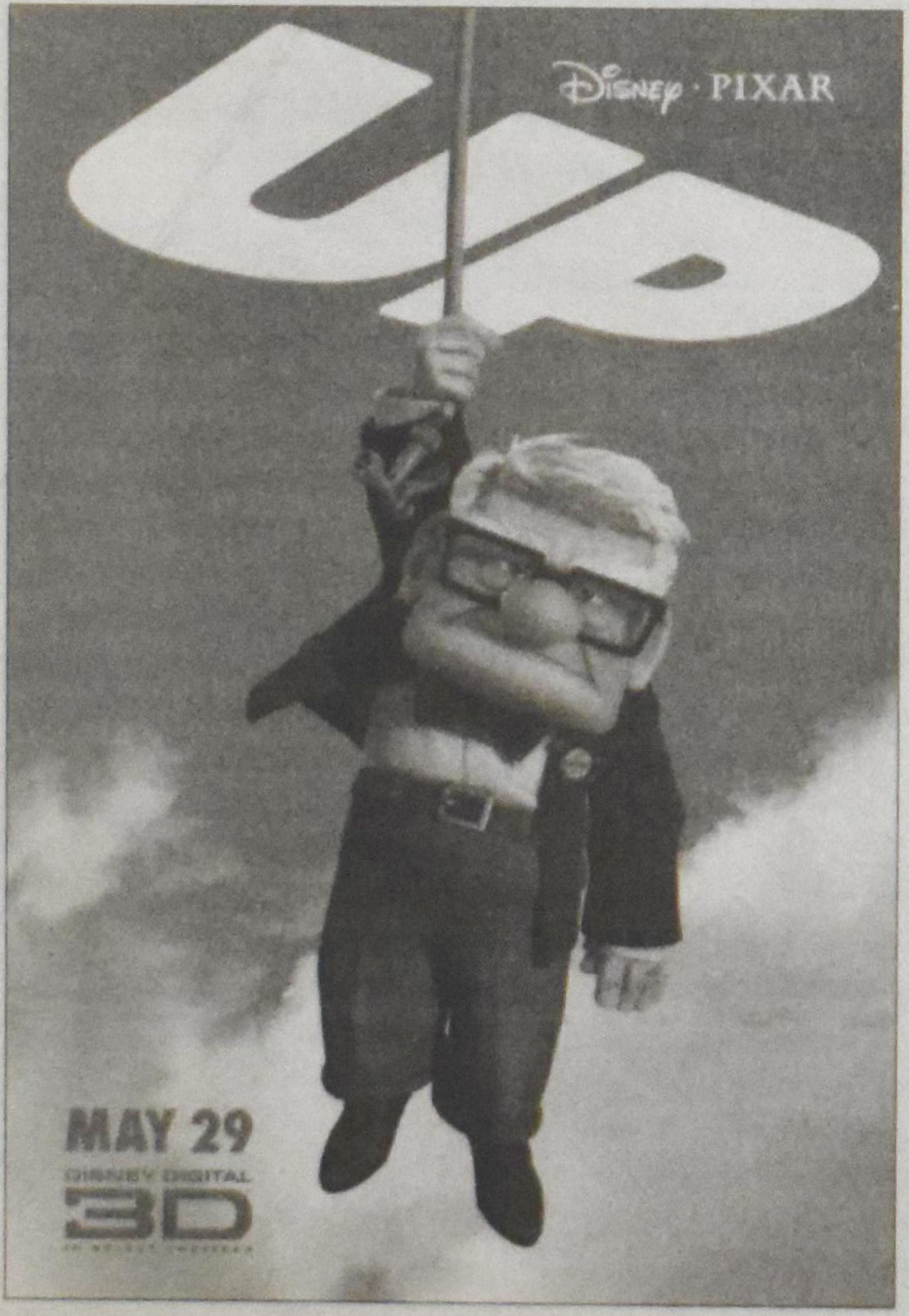
1940 c Vlaar kids riding in a schuit *on the* sloot

There was skating almost every day during the winter. If you were home, you better go skating when there was ice. It was all outdoors, too. My dad would watch us from the window, often interjecting a "There she goes!" or "There he goes!" in his enjoyment of our fun. We could reach the skating rink over the canals so we would tie our skate blades on over our winter shoes by the canal that passed along our back yard. After lunch, at one o'clock, my dad would say, "Come on, girls, get going," and we went: we wouldn't come home again until dark, between five and six o'clock. Supper would be steaming on the table ready for the appetites we brought in with us... and we'd collapse happily around the table, rosy with exertion and exhaustion. The next day we'd do it all over again.

In the summer, we would sometimes go boating. Our father had a rowboat and a *schuit* – the schuit had to be pushed by a long iron-tipped pole. I started rowing when I was very young, only eight or nine years. If we weren't in boats, we were on our bicycles. Cars weren't as common as they are today and we traveled everywhere on two wheels. By that, I include also the day trips we took on our bikes. We certainly did not have any trouble getting lots of exercise!

I had a lot of girl friends at this time – there were eight or ten of us in our circle. After a while, I no longer enjoyed this very much – there were too many of us. I developed a strong friendship with two girls outside our big circle. That was in our teens. Although they both still live in Holland and I live in Canada, our friendship remains strong and our contact close to this day.

Continued on p. 16



Up is a rare treat

Brett Alan Dewing

Pixar's tenth straight blockbuster of computer animation bears the deceptively simple title, *Up*. Far from simple, the film is something like a deft mingling of *About Schmidt* and *The Rocketeer*. And, against all odds, it works – perfectly.

This is a stunning picture in every aspect. Never has computer animation seemed so alive, so insightful. The material of a curtain triggers an almost physical memory in your fingertips, the sheen of a dog's fur elicits crystal-clear visuals from your own life. While the style of the animation is blocky and bears the same stylization of the human form seen in other Pixar films, like *The Incredibles*, the craft behind each image is breathtaking.

As striking as the visuals are, though, the story of *Up* shines even brighter. The movie concerns an octogenarian named Carl Fredricksen who finds himself alone and misunderstood in the world after his beloved wife passes. Carl's mind continually flows in two directions: back to the wild, unfulfilled dreams of young marriage and ahead to the uncertain future that finds him being shuffled off to a retirement home by court order.

The plot follows Carl as, through the miracle of animation, he is granted one last grand gesture to live out the adventures his wife and he had always imagined. In one perfect, joyful, bittersweet fantasy image, Carl ties thousands of balloons to his house and flies away from his troubles.

As grand as this sequence is, though, it is overshadowed by an achingly beautiful montage that charts the Fredricksens' courtship and marriage. It is this type of side-by-side fantasy/humanity dynamic that defines *Up*. This may be the only film of which I can honestly say, "I laughed, I cried."

Most of the humour comes from Carl's unwelcome sidekick, Russell, a local scouting tyke who inadvertently stows away on the floating house. The ties between Carl and Russell grow more overt as the film progresses and they face adversity. While *Up* is a film about a wide array of things, at its heart it explores the idea of family and what happens when we cannot let go of old dreams to make way for new ones.

It has been awhile since so wholesome a film made such a strong impact on me, and that is perhaps the highest praise for Pixar's magic character piece/adventure/comedy/fantasy/family film. By embracing the human, it manages to become a truly inspirational and fun-filled film for all ages.

Brett Alan Dewing is the Features Editor for the Christian Courier.

Classifieds

Birthday

Great is God's faithfulness!

The family of

Neil Rietema

are thankful to the Lord for all the wonderful years that God has granted him.

Neil will be celebrating his **80th Birthday** with family and friends on July 26, 2009.

From the family:
Willie, loving wife of Neil
Ben & Grace Rietema
Sy & Grace Bennik
Ron Rietema (at home with the Lord)
Winn Rietema
Marcel & Deb Oostenbrink
Fred & Linda Baong
20 grandchildren
5 great-grandchildren &
2 foster great-grandchildren

We also celebrated Neil and Willie's **55th Wedding Anniversary** on April 14, 2009.

Thanks be to God!

Address: Box 29, Bentley AB T0C 0J0
e-mail: willie@telus.net

Anniversary

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Cor. 3:11

With thankfulness to God, we celebrate the **50th Wedding Anniversary** of our parents and grandparents.

Hank and Dini Oldejans (nee **Kalsbeek**)

on August 8,2009

With love, your children and grandchildren:
Merlin & Jacqueline Oldejans
Willem, Eli

Grace & Bernie Hensel
Robyn, Lauren, Conrad, Amber

Home address:102-9006 158 Street
Surrey BC V4N 5G4
Best wishes can be sent via email to
Oldejans@telus.net

Anniversary

50th Wedding Anniversary

On July 24, 2009

Harry and Anne Voortman (nee **VanderWal**)

celebrated 50 years of marriage.

We are thankful for their love and faithfulness to God and each other and for the wonderful example they have been to all of us. Congratulations and love from your children and grandchildren.

Address: 1034 Conrad Court, Burlington ON L7T 3E4

Obituaries

Marten Van Dyk

1910-2009
Went Home to be with his Lord and Saviour at Shalom Manor, Grimsby on Saturday June 27, 2009.

Beloved husband of Tina (Schievink) and the late Elisabeth (Schilstra). Dear father of James (Grace); George (Carol); Hilda (George) Feddema; Margaret (Gerry) Tenbrink; Martin (Hattie); JoAnne (Julius) de Jager; John (Elizabeth) and the late Florence Brink. Father-in-law to Frank Brink (Barb). Sadly missed by his 31 grandchildren and 51 great-grandchildren. Lovingly remembered by John (Nellie) Schievink; Gerrie (late Peter) Rupke, Marten & Corrie Van Dyk; Minna Van Dijk (the late Yme) and Ann Draycott and their families.

I will praise you, O Lord with all my heart.
Psalm 138:1

Correspondence: JoAnne de Jager
101 San Fernando Dr,
Hamilton ON L9C 2C3

The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy.
Psalm 126: 3

In commemoration of the **60th anniversary** of

Maranatha Christian Reformed Church

in **Woodstock** we would like to invite former pastors, associates and congregational members to a celebration service on Sept 13, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

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Bienke: my story *...continued from p. 15*

Bienke and friend Brechie circa 1940

None of us were able to go on to higher education; there was just no money for that. Unlike today, one could get no government grants, no scholarships, no loans from the bank. However, when I was 17, I got my *coupeuse* (dress-making) diploma, paying for it myself. The sewing skills I learned at that time have helped me all my life. They were useful right away; I sewed clothes for my sisters and me, cutting up old fabric for new uses when the war hit us with major shortages. Later it helped me keep my children well-dressed even when we were most short of money. Just as important, though, my sewing has been a source of great enjoyment for me.

I graduated during the same year that the second world war broke out. That very quickly destroyed many of the comforts we had enjoyed up until then. For example, I was taking organ lessons, but because of the cold, the curfew and the lack of electricity the lessons petered out after only two years. Like so many other pleasures, the occupying Germans took this source of entertainment away too.

Since my 12th year, I have had a number of boy friends. But that stopped as soon as a young man called Adam started to ask me for dates. Adam was a city boy who needed to hide in the country. He moved to Andijk as an *onderduiker*, that is, he went underground in Andijk, because the Germans wanted to conscript him to work in a German factory. Even though I had started dating Adam a couple of weeks earlier, this did not necessarily stop other young men from expressing their interest. There were two in particular who wanted to take me out. I guess my interest in Adam must have been noticeable to my family right away though. When one of my would-be suitors asked my older brother Simon if I would agree to go out if he asked me, Simon told him flat out, "You are too late ... She is going with someone already." The other young man brought me one evening a magnificent bunch of gladioli, 25 or 30 of them, long-stemmed and pure white except for one pink one in the middle. He had cut them himself a half hour earlier. Both were very nice young men but our Heavenly Father had other plans.

Continued next issue.

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gcrcrecruiter@live.ca

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is excited about expanding its staff ministry with the addition of a

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Please send a letter with an attached resume to
Rehobothcrc@bellnet.ca.

Classifieds

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For a complete job description, send résumés to:

Clinton CRC
PO Box 697, Clinton ON N0M 1L0

or email to clintoncrc@tcc.on.ca and we will send the description to you.

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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Redeemer University College invites applications for a tenure-track position in Philosophy to begin July 2010. The successful candidate will be an excellent instructor, able to teach a wide range of undergraduate courses in Philosophy, and will have opportunity to teach advanced courses in his or her particular area of research interest.

As a liberal arts and sciences university college rooted in the Reformed tradition of Christianity, we seek candidates committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from this perspective. Applicants should possess or be near completion of a Ph.D. Interested applicants should submit a curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, evidence of teaching quality, and a one-page or two-page statement describing their own faith commitment and how it shapes their academic work. The deadline for applications is **30 September 2009,** or until the position is filled.

Direct general inquiries and applications to:

Dr. Jacob P. Ellens, Vice President, Academic
Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4 Canada
jellens@redeemer.ca

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REDEEMER
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Redeemer University College invites applications for a tenure-track position (any rank) in applied experimental psychology, beginning July 1, 2010. The ability to teach courses in personality, social psychology, and behaviour modification is a requirement. The successful candidate will also be expected to teach courses in other areas of psychology.

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Direct general inquiries and applications to:

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Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
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Shalom Manor

SHALOM MANOR FOUNDATION

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The Shalom Manor Foundation is seeking an experienced development director and fund developer to develop and implement the recently established Shalom Manor Foundation and its program for Shalom Manor, a Christian long-term care community. Responsible to the Foundation Board of Directors, the successful candidate will participate in capital campaigns, promote planned giving and the established endowment, as well as increase opportunities for sustained operational funding within the Reformed Christian community and elsewhere. The successful candidate will embody commitment and understanding of the Reformed Christian community, be a motivated and strategic thinking individual with excellent donor relations skills and possess the ability to achieve financial goals by planning, implementing and managing fund development strategy. This is a .5 FTE position.

For a complete job description visit our website at www.shalommanor.ca .

Qualified candidates should forward a resume and cover letter with salary expectations to: Mr. Ron Vahrmeyer, Chair
Shalom Manor Foundation
12 Bartlett Avenue, Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

Closing Date: **August 28, 2009**

We wish to thank all applicants for their interest and effort in applying for this position. However, only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted.

Shalom Manor & Gardens

SHALOM MANOR AND GARDENS,
a Christian, Dutch ethnic, long-term-care and retirement home has an immediate opening for a

Payroll Administrator

The ideal candidate will possess CPA certification or enrolment, have two to four years related payroll experience, preferably in a unionized environment, possess above average skills using Microsoft Excel, and have excellent time management and people skills. Reporting directly to our controller, you will be responsible for processing payroll using ADP software. Knowledge of AccPac and a background in HR would be considered an asset.

Send resume, with cover letter, no later than **July 29, 2009,** *to:*

Controller, Shalom Manor
12 Bartlett Ave
Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

Shalom Manor offers an excellent salary and benefits package.
Only those candidates considered for the position will be contacted.
For a complete job description, please visit our website at
www.shalommanor.ca.

Classifieds

Recipe: Summer salad with goat cheese

Zomersalade met geitenkaas

200 grams / 7 oz. goat cheese
7 grams / ¼ oz. fresh mint
3 nectarines
4 tbls walnut oil
½ lemon
1 tbsp honey
75 grams / 3 oz. mixed salad
75 grams / 3 oz. fresh rucola
55 grams / 2 oz. walnuts
black pepper

Prepare the goat cheese by cutting it into long slivers of about 1/3" wide. Strip the mint leaves from the sprigs. Peel the nectarines and divide them in segments.

Heat a heavy skillet or stovetop grill pan. Thinly brush the nectarine segments with about 1 tbsp walnut oil. Grill them for a minute each side and take from the pan.

Squeeze the half lemon over a salad bowl, add honey, walnut oil, fresh ground black pepper and salt to taste and whish into a smooth dressing.

Gently fold in the cheese, salad, rucola, mint and walnuts.

Put the salad into four bowls and garnish with the grilled nectarine segments. Serve with a wholewheat baguette and a fruity wine such as Sangria.

Variation: add parts of other fruits, such as slice strawberries, pieces of apple and/or blueberries.

Recipe from website, godutch.com

Sudoku 9x9 - Medium (131385070) www.sudoku-puzzles.net

2			5		4			1
	1		9		3		6	
		6				3		
		3	2		5	7		
4								9
		8	3		1	6		
		5				1		
	9		1		6		8	
1			7		2			6

Diaconal Ministries is excited to announce an upcoming concert with **Michael Card** as part of our 50th anniversary celebration at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario on Saturday **October 17**.

Michael Card is a Dove award winning singer/songwriter. The concert begins at 3 pm. Ticket price is $25. The concert is part of our all day annual conference.

The **'Day of Encouragement'** begins at 9 am and features 40 excellent workshops on a variety of topics like caring with boundaries, mentoring, leadership and community ministry.

Visit our website for more information – www.diaconalministries.com

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We at Christian Courier thank all our advertisers. They help make the paper possible.

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug 29 - 30 Frisian weekend. See ad for details.

Aug 30 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

Sep 13 60th anniversary of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in **Woodstock**. All former pastors, associates and congregational members are invited to a celebration service at 10:00 a.m. Lunch after the service. For further information call the church @519 539 5301 or email at mcrcw@execulink.com.

Oct 3 The next Netherlands Bazaar will be held in the Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Ave. in **Thornhill**, Ontario

Oct 17 Diaconal ministries hosts the 'Day of Encouragement' featuring Michael Card at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**. See ad for details.

Nov 20 Christian Festival Concert at 7:30 pm at the Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto. Call 416-636-9779 or email landmkooy@rogers.com More in details in upcoming issues.

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FRISIAN WEEKEND!

Saturday, August 29 at 1:00 pm
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Sunday, August 30, at 3:00 pm
Frisian Service at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Woodstock with Pastor Hellinga

Ring-Riding with Frisian Horses

Refreshments will be available.

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Attention!

Hamilton Young Adults

If you were a Hamilton Young Adult of the late 70s and early 80s, here's your chance to get together.

A reunion is being planned for October 24, 2009.

Details to follow in the next issue.

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Our issue dates, deadlines, contact information, recently run job ads, and community events can be found on our website at:
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Travel

Beauty through brokenness

Odile Vander Zaag

Here I sit: computer in front of me, an empty document haunting me. I am thankful for the opportunity to share my story with you, but I am at a loss for words, not sure how to start.

Beauty through brokenness is a catchy title, but what does it mean? It may mean different things to different people. In its simplest form, beauty through brokenness could encourage people to look for the positive in negative situations. I think *Beauty through brokenness* means looking past the initial hardship to focus on the beauty

Real-life situations

Brokenness comes in many forms. It could be losing a job, losing someone you love, suffering from poverty or injustice. In my case it was the Rwanda Genocide and the loss of my parents. When I was able to acknowledge the awfulness of the genocide and my parents' death, I could move forward to see the beauty in my opportunities. It is like opening the curtains and letting the light in.

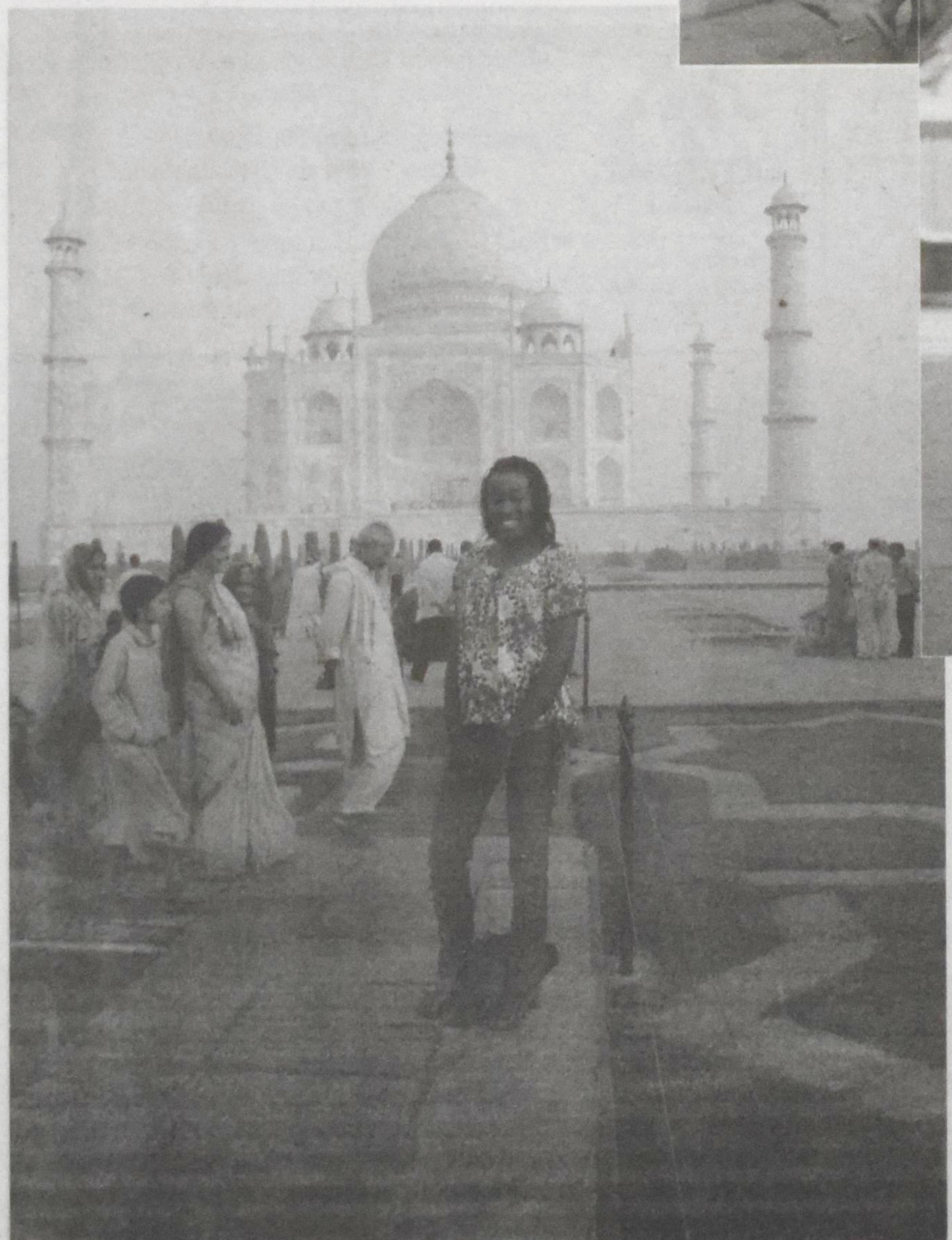
I traveled to India and Bangladesh last October and was able to experience a glimpse of their culture. There are many words that come to mind when thinking of this part of our world. Many are from the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*: slums, overcrowded, the class system. Unfortunately these words only focus on what some may call the brokenness of these countries. I cannot say that these issues are not real, but I want to share with you the beauty I experienced. I want to celebrate three beautiful things I found: the colour, the culture and an emphasis on family.

Colour

I saw a glimpse of colours early in the morning, on the road. The women were walking to work, dressed in magnificent saris. Together they looked like a flowing rainbow. Each woman wore a different colour – vibrant oranges, rich blues – and walked with dignity and grace.

Three generations living under the same roof.

In the middle of busyness, families are together.



Odile standing in front of one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Culture

The majestic Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, took 22 years to build and is now enjoyed by local Indian and foreign tourists. I visited the Taj Mahal early in the morning and even got to touch the marble walls. The Taj Mahal allowed me to see the precious detail and time spent to create Indian art.

Family

In the markets I saw families together. In the museums I saw families together. In the streets I saw families together. In the villages I saw families together. Multigenerational families live together, so raising the children is a shared responsibility.

I will leave you with this question. In life, we might be hit by brokenness or hardship. Then we have a choice to make. Are we willing to look past the brokenness to the beauty that is waiting to be uncovered?

Odile Martina Vander Zaag just graduated from Unity Christian High School in Barrie, Ontario. If you would like to look at the book she created about her experience, you can find it online. Google "Beauty Through Brokenness Odile Martina Vander Zaag" to preview parts of this book for free.